The Fish Lands: German trade with Iceland, Shetland and the Faroe Islands in the late 15th and 16th Century

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Preface

The current work was defended as a PhD thesis at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Hamburg in 2019. The supervisors were Jürgen Sarnowsky (University of Hamburg) as primary and Carsten Jahnke (University of Copenhagen) as secondary. The work you are reading now is a slightly revised version of this thesis, with minor points added or corrected, and an updated bibliography.

However, the publication of this book marks only the end of a process that was set in course long before I started to work on the subject. At an interdisciplinary conference about the medieval North Atlantic trade in Avaldsnes, Norway, in 2013, the idea came up that it would be good if someone would compile an extensive overview of the German trade with the North Atlantic, based on historical written sources. This idea was included in the project "Between the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea: Interdisciplinary Studies of the Hanse", which was led by Natascha Mehler, funded by the Leibniz Association, and took place at the German Maritime Museum in Bremerhaven from 2015 to 2018. It included a PhD position for a historian, at which point I entered the process.

It has been a great pleasure to work as part of this wonderfully inspiring interdisciplinary project, and my sincerest gratitude goes out to Natascha Mehler, whose advice and feedback on the texts, enthusiasm for the North Atlantic islands, and interdisciplinary research have been incredibly helpful. The same goes for the other team members, Mike Belasus and Hans Christian Küchelmann, and associated researchers Philipp Grassel and Florian Dirks, for their ideas and comments from different perspectives.

For the archival work in various countries, I owe thanks to Adolf Hofmeister, Hrefna Róbertsdóttir, and Símun Arge, who acquainted me with the archives and the sources, as well as Brian Smith and John Ballantyne, who have been very helpful in providing me with and helping me to understand the sources written in sixteenth-century Scots. Alessia Bauer and Philip Lavender helped me with the Icelandic sources. Of great value has also been the work of Inga Lange, who transcribed large parts of the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne, as well as John Nicholls and Hans Martin Horst for programming and entering data into the source database *HANSdoc*.

Conversations with many people have helped me to sharpen my thoughts and have provided valuable input, both related to content and on a more general level. Among others (in alphabetical order by first name): Angela Ling Huang, Árni Daníel Júlíusson, Christian Ashauer, Christian Manger, Christoph Dartmann, Daniel McNaughton, Esther Sahle, Helgi Þorláksson, Kevin Martin, Kilian Baur, Mark Gardiner, Pétur Kristjánsson, Philipp Höhn, Sarah Lentz, and

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Vilborg Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel. Special thanks go out to Rolf de Weijert-Gutman, for his input on digital editing and for giving me good advice I chose to ignore.

Graphical support was provided by Sophie Holterman, who designed the timeline of harbours in Iceland and the Faroes, and Natalie Lehbrecht-Zollgreve, who helped with the creation of the maps. My gratitude goes out to Helgi Michelsen, Armgarð Weihe, and Laurie Goodlad for accommodation, transport, and guidance in the Faroes and Shetland. Catering was provided for a large part by the cafés Lisboa, Karton, Frida, Heinrich and Pour pour in Bremen, who should thank me indeed, as I don't want to know how much money I spent on coffee and cakes during the writing of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues at the German Maritime Museum and flatmates past and present, as well as my dear family and friends for their continued mental support. And last but certainly not least, thank you, my dearest Nina, for enduring me.

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Abbreviations

CBS	Court Book of Shetland
DI	Diplomatarium Islandicum
DN	Diplomatarium Norvegicum
HR	Hanserecesse
HUB	Hansisches Urkundenbuch
KB	Kancelliets brevbøger
NGL	Norges gamle love
NLO	Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Geschäftsstelle Oldenburg
NR	Norske registre
NRR	Norske rigs-registranter
NRS	National Records of Scotland
RAK	Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen
RAL	Registre over alle lande
RPC	Register of the Privy Council
SAB	Staatsarchiv Bremen
SAH	Staatsarchiv der freien und Hansestadt Hamburg
SAO	Stadtarchiv Oldenburg
SD	Shetland Documents
UBL	Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck

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1 Introduction

Once upon a time, a skipper from Bremen died and was buried in a land far away from home. Nowadays, if one wants to visit his grave on the island of Unst in northern Shetland, one has to take a small gravel road across a barren moory landscape where nothing seems to live but sheep and the occasional marsh bird. At the end of the path, one reaches a secluded bay where the grey waves and the rain torture the sands of the beach, and out of the fog appears a ruined medieval chapel with a graveyard around it. Inside the roofless chapel are a number of ancient gravestones (Figure 1.1), their texts made almost unreadable by lichen that has grown over the words and centuries of rain and salty sea wind. In a corner lies a grave slab, on which one can discern, with great difficulty, the following: "Here lies the honourable Segebad Detken, citizen and merchant from Bremen, who has traded in this country for 52 years. In 1573 on August 20, he passed away in Our Lord. God have mercy on his soul".[1]

Of course, the story above is embellished to mimic the feel of a nineteenth-century Gothic novel. The purpose is to emphasise the otherness, the mysterious nature, and the physical remoteness of the North Atlantic islands, as seen from the European continent. Some of the German merchants who sailed here in the late medieval and early modern period fostered such an image of the place as well. Gories Peerse, a skipper and merchant from Hamburg, started his poem "About Iceland" ("Van Ysslandt", 1561) with the following lines:

> There is a land that lies Northwest in the sea,
> from the German lands, as they say
> about four hundred miles or more away
> Iceland is its right name.
> It is adventurous because of frost, rain, wind, and snow
> and in addition its exceptionally high mountains.
> There grows no grass except in the valleys.[2]

1 George MacDonald, "More Shetland Tombstones", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 69 (1934): 27–36. "HIR LIGHT DER EHRSAME / SEGEBAD DETKEN BVRGER / VND KAUFFHANDELER ZU / BREMEN [HE] HETT IN DISEN / LANDE SINE HANDELING / GEBRUCKET 52 IAHR / IST [ANNO 15..] DEN / 20 AUGUSTI SELIGHT / IN UNSEN HERN ENT / SCHLAPEN DER SEELE GODT GNEDIGH IST." MacDonald assumed that Detken died in 1573; see Appendix D.

2 "Dar licht ein Landt Nordwest yn der See, / Vam Dudtschen Lande, so men secht, / Veer hundert Myle ummetrendt efft mehr, / Ysslandt so ys syn Name recht. / Dat ys eventurlick van Frost, Regen, Windt und Schnee, / Dartho van ungehuren Bergen aver allen, / Dar wasset neen Gras sunder yn den Dalen." Wilhelm Seelmann, "Gories Peerse's Gedicht Van Island", *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung* 9 (1883): 116.

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Figure 1.1: The ruined church in Lunda Wick, Unst. The grave slab in the corner right of the doorway is that of Segebad Detken. Photograph by the author.

Dithmar Blefken, who claimed to be a ship's preacher who went to Iceland on a Hamburg ship in 1563, started his voyage among the sparsely inhabited North Atlantic islands, before he reached Iceland, "which looks like a cloud bank in winter from far away".[3]

Although sailing across the open ocean posed quite some challenges indeed,[4] the North Atlantic islands – which were characterised as the "fish lands" in a document from Bremen – were not as remote as Peerse and Blefken would have us believe. For example, Segebad Detken's grave slab mentions that he traded in Shetland for 52 years, suggesting that connections between northern Germany and the North Atlantic were frequent in the sixteenth century. It has

3 "Quae a longe apparet, ut si nubes hiberno tempore essent." Dithmar Blefken, *Island – Fremdes Land. Das Reisebuch des Dithmar Blefken 1563–1565*, ed. Gerhard Holzer and Robert Wallisch (Vienna, 2012), 24–25.

4 See Section 4.1.

been estimated that in Shetland, around ten to twelve German trading ships were visiting each year,[5] and in Iceland 20 to 25.[6] Apparently, the distance and the risks of crossing the open ocean were small enough – compared to the expected profits – to maintain frequent trade connections and a merchant could base a career upon trading in the North Atlantic islands.

Although Iceland, the Faroes, and Shetland were, as tributary lands of the Norwegian crown, part of the staple of Bergen (Norway), occasional direct trade connections between merchants from northern Germany and the North Atlantic islands are attested from the fifteenth century onwards. From the moment that the Icelandic trade was first legalised by the Danish king Christian I in 1468, merchants from Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck traded with the North Atlantic islands on a regular basis, despite frequent complaints from the Hanseatic settlement (*Kontor*) in Bergen. In the sixteenth century they controlled the foreign trade with these regions, bringing stockfish and other products such as sulphur to the European continent, and in return supplying the islands with all kinds of commodities, varying from foodstuffs and clothing to timber and tools. In 1601 King Christian IV granted his Danish subjects the monopoly on the Icelandic trade, but in Shetland, Bremen and Hamburg merchants remained active until the early eighteenth century.

This work will study the German trade with the North Atlantic from a socio-economic perspective. In previous research, most of the attention has been paid to the political and economic aspects, and consequently the actors and organisational structures of the North Atlantic trade have largely been ignored. I will therefore focus on persons like Segebad Detken and Gories Peerse, asking questions like: Who were the merchants who sailed to the North Atlantic from northern German cities? What was their social position within their home towns? How were they related to each other and how did they organise themselves? These are questions to which the current studies provide insufficient answers; yet they are of much importance for the study of the Hanse, especially since recent studies have emphasised the importance of informal, horizontal social relations (e.g. based on family or friendship) and networks for the Hanseatic

5 Klaus Friedland, "Der hansische Shetlandhandel", in *Stadt und Land in der Geschichte des Ostseeraums. Wilhelm Koppe zum 65. Geburtstag überreicht von Freunden und Schülern*, ed. Klaus Friedland (Lübeck, 1973), 73; Hance D. Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade, 1550–1914* (Edinburgh, 1984), 12–14.

6 Adolf E. Hofmeister, "Hansische Kaufleute auf Island im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert", in *Kirche – Kaufmann – Kabeljau: 1000 Jahre Bremer Islandfahrt*, ed. Adolf E. Hofmeister and Alfred Löhr, Kleine Schriften des Staatsarchivs Bremen 30 (Bremen, 2000), 36.

organisation of trade,[7] as opposed to the more hierarchically and formally organised southern European trade companies. This also goes for the incorporation of German merchants in the local socioeconomic networks in the North Atlantic. In a recent volume, Stuart Jenks has stressed that the study of these local networks is essential to understanding how Hanseatic trade functioned.[8]

Moreover, the North Atlantic trade has often been regarded as a mere footnote in Hanseatic historiography. Philippe Dolinger, for example, only devotes one paragraph to the trade with Iceland in his well-known monograph about the Hanse, and does not mention the Faroes or Shetland.[9] In addition, the North Atlantic trade was often characterised by scholars as old-fashioned or primitive, in the sense that merchants had to sail North themselves to accompany their commodities due to the lack of a commercial infrastructure on the islands – or so it has been supposed.[10] This contrasts with the established trade practices in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when merchants usually conducted trade from their office and let others sail for them. However, if the North Atlantic trade was really so exceptional, it is curious that it has not received more scholarly attention, as its study might confirm or challenge assumptions about what was considered normal commercial practice at the time. Moreover, the "primitive" assumption does not square with the fact that major merchants in the North Atlantic trade, such as Luder Ottersen in Lübeck or Thomas Koppen in Hamburg, did not sail north themselves.[11] In this study, I will therefore focus on how the actors in the North Atlantic trade organised their

7 Stephan Selzer and Ulf Christian Ewert, "Verhandeln und verkaufen, vernetzen und vertrauen. Über die Netzwerkstruktur des hansischen Handels", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 119 (2001): 135–161; Stuart Jenks, "Transaktionskostentheorie und die mittelalterliche Hanse", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 123 (2005): 31–42; Gabriel Zeilinger and Sunhild Kleingärtner, eds., *Raumbildung durch Netzwerke? Der Ostseeraum zwischen Wikingerzeit und Spätmittelalter aus archäologischer und geschichtswissenschaftlicher Perspektive* (Bonn, 2012).

8 Stuart Jenks, "Conclusion", in *The Hanse in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz and Stuart Jenks, The Northern World 60 (Leiden, 2013), 259.

9 Philippe Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, ed. Volker Henn and Nils Jörn, 6th ed. (Stuttgart, 2012), 318.

10 Ruth Prange, *Die bremische Kaufmannschaft des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts in sozialgeschichtlicher Betrachtung*, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Staatsarchiv der Freien Hansestadt Bremen 31 (Bremen, 1963), 39; Gerd Steinbrinker, "Hamburger kaufmännische Fahrergesellschaften" (Staatsexamenarbeit, Universität Hamburg, 1962), 111; Friederike Christiane Koch, *Untersuchungen über den Aufenthalt von Isländern in Hamburg für den Zeitraum 1520–1662*, Beiträge zur Geschichte Hamburgs 49 (Hamburg, 1995), 39.

11 Pierre Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen – Facteur de Christian IV à Lübeck", in *A Special Brew . . . Essays in Honour of Kristof Glamann*, ed. Thomas Riis (Odense, 1993), 358–360; Louis Zachariasen, *Føroyar sum rættarsamfelag 1535–1655* (Tórshavn, 1961), 165.

business, in order to tell the more nuanced story that this multifaceted – and hardly primitive – trade merits.

I will treat the subject in three parts: in the first, I will re-examine the historical background from both an economic and a political perspective, combined with a critical re-evaluation of the historical evidence. In particular, I will devote substantial attention to the attitude of the different factions within the Hanse and the Danish-Norwegian (or in Shetland: Scottish) authorities towards the North Atlantic trade, as their policies provided the conditions under which the German merchants operated. In the second part I will focus on how the trade was organised on the islands themselves, both from a socioeconomic (e.g. the maintenance of networks with islanders, the use of credit, relations with local authorities) and from a physical perspective (e.g. harbours, buildings and commercial infrastructure). Finally, in the last part I will look at the merchants trading with the North Atlantic in the socioeconomic context of their home towns: how did they organise their trading companies, what was their social status within the city's merchant community, how were they involved in urban social structures, and what role did family relations play?

The Faroes, Shetland, and Iceland will be regarded here as a single region, as they have certain characteristics in common that made the conditions for trade comparable across these islands. The first is their status as *skattlands* ('tributary lands') of the Norwegian crown and their position as part of the Bergen staple system. The second is the absence of large settlements and a socioeconomic structure organised around farms. The third is that foreign economic interest mainly centered on fish, and the fourth is the dependency of the local economy on imports. At the same time, differences between the North Atlantic islands, in terms of political overlordship after 1468, for example, do shed light on the effect of royal policies on the organisation of the trade, and should not be glossed over. Finally, German merchants considered these islands as forming a whole, as is shown, for example, by the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants in Hamburg, which also counted merchants in the Faroes and Shetland among its members.[12]

Moreover, the narrow focus on specific islands in historical research may have distorted the understanding of certain phenomena, as Rolf Hammel-Kiesow has shown with regard to the attitudes of the Hanseatic Diets towards the North Atlantic trade, for example.[13] That being said, parallels between the commercial

12 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 5.

13 Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen gemeinsamer Politik am Beispiel des Nordatlantikhandels", in *Hansischer Handel im Strukturwandel vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rolf Hammel-Kiesow and Stephan Selzer (Trier, 2016), 187.

situations across the islands have often been presumed by authors, but not satisfyingly underpinned with sources. Klaus Friedland, for example, assumes that in many regards the Shetland trade mirrored the Iceland trade, but does not provide evidence for many of his contentions.[14] A comparative approach combined with in-depth archival work is therefore needed in order to evaluate the accuracy of such claims. Finally, the reader might wonder why Orkney, which shares many of the characteristics sketched above, has not been mentioned so far. The reason is that there is so little evidence for German trade activity on these islands in the late medieval and early modern period, that they will come under consideration where appropriate, but they will not be the focus of the present study.

A comparative approach across these island groups also necessarily defines the time frame, as German merchants were prohibited from engaging in the Icelandic trade in 1601, with the German trade in the Faroes apparently having come to a halt in the early 1590s. Although the trade from Hamburg and Bremen with Shetland continued for at least another century, I have chosen not to research this period extensively, as the changing structure of the trade in the seventeenth century, due to the growing influence of Scottish landowners, the rising tax pressure on foreign trade, and other changes make this period worthy of a study on its own.[15]

1.1 Sources

Like the subject, this study will take a comprehensive approach regarding the source material. In the past, studies of the North Atlantic trade were usually based upon the archival material from one city.[16] Moreover, editions of written sources often do not cover the late sixteenth century, or had not yet appeared when a scholar undertook his research, which limited the material available to

14 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel."

15 A research project on this topic, which also involves a closer look on the situation in Orkney, is currently taking place at the German Maritime Museum and the University of the Highlands and Islands.

16 E.g. Ernst Baasch, *Die Islandfahrt der Deutschen: namentlich der Hamburger, vom 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert*, Forschungen zur hamburgischen Handelsgeschichte 1 (Hamburg, 1889); Richard Ehrenberg, "Aus der Hamburgischen Handelsgeschichte", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 10 (1899): 1–40; Dietrich Kohl, "Der oldenburgisch-isländische Handel im 16. Jahrhundert", *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte des Herzogtums Oldenburg* 13 (1905): 34–53; Hermann Entholt and Ludwig Beutin, *Bremen und Nordeuropa*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur Bremischen Handelsgeschichte 1 (Weimar, 1937).

the researcher.[17] For example, the *Diplomatarium Islandicum*, the collection of medieval Icelandic sources, stops in 1570,[18] and the *Hanserecesse*, the records of the Hanseatic Diets, were published up to 1537.[19] The *Shetland Documents* have only been published since 1994, and were therefore not available to researchers before that year, such as Klaus Friedland.[20] Moreover, the extensive records in the Danish National Archive in Copenhagen (*Rigsarkivet*), which provide a wealth of information especially about the late sixteenth century, have been widely disregarded since many of them were not published in *Diplomatarium Islandicum*, *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, or other editions. An additional issue is that these sources were written in several languages, which in combination with the geographical distance resulted in many Icelandic sources being disregarded by German historians in the past, and vice versa.

The present study seeks to overcome these problems, and is based on all edited volumes currently available as well as extensive archival research in Copenhagen, Hamburg, Bremen, and Oldenburg. A helpful tool has been the online database *HANSdoc*, which has been developed in the course of this project and which has collected sources from many different locations and volumes in one place. It is freely accessible to present and future researchers.[21] However, it is nearly impossible to include all documents pertaining to the North Atlantic trade: I am sure to have missed something in the vast holdings of the Rigsarkivet, and future research in for example the municipal archives of Lübeck, Gdańsk, and Stade and The National Archives in London might reveal more information about the German trade in the North Atlantic.

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17 Ernst Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 17n2, for example, expresses the expectation that forthcoming editions of the *Hanserecesse* would reveal new information about the North Atlantic trade.

18 *Diplomatarium Islandicum – Íslenzkt Fornbréfasafn, sem hefir inni að halda Bréf og Gjörninga, Dóma og Máldaga, og aðrar Skrár, er snerta Ísland eða Íslenzka Menn*, 16 vols (Copenhagen, Reykjavik, 1857) (hereafter cited in text as *DI*). For the history of compiling the *DI* and its authors, see Sverrir Jakobsson, "Icelandic Medieval Documents: From Diplomatarium Islandicum to Digital Publishing", *Almanach Medievisty-Editora*, (2011): 42–46.

19 *Hanserezesse: Die Rezesse und andere Akten der Hansetage*, 24 vols (Leipzig, 1870) (hereafter cited in text as *HR*). These editions are not without ideological and practical problems, though. See Angela Huang and Ulla Kypta, "Ein neues Haus auf altem Fundament. Neue Trends in der Hanseforschung und die Nutzbarkeit der Rezesseditionen", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 129 (2011): 213–229.

20 John H. Ballantyne and Brian Smith, eds., *Shetland Documents, 1195–1579* (Lerwick, 1999); *Shetland Documents, 1580–1611* (Lerwick, 1994); *Shetland Documents, 1612–1637* (Lerwick, 2016) (hereafter cited in text as *SD*).

21 Bart Holterman and John Nicholls, eds., "HANSdoc Database", 2017, https://hansdoc.dsm.museum.

In matters of content, the vast majority of sources consist of private and diplomatic correspondence and court records. Most of these are related to the acquisition of licences for the use of harbours in Iceland, which were introduced around 1563. Along with information about the various harbours in use in Iceland, these documents occasionally provide valuable insights into the workings of the North Atlantic trade and the relations between merchants, especially their frequent conflicts about the right to use a certain harbour. However, this does result in a source-defined focus on late sixteenth-century Iceland, which means that this time and region is over-represented in this study. Especially for the Faroes, there is regrettably a great lack of sources. Moreover, in most cases these sources are strongly biased, as pleas in court cases or appeals to rulers tend to depict the position of the author in a favourable light, which must be kept in mind when assessing these documents.

Although this study focuses on the sixteenth century, in the case of Shetland in particular there is a wealth of sources from the seventeenth century, whereas the archival records for the previous century are meagre. Many seventeenth-century records from the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh and the Shetland Museum and Archives in Lerwick, as well as private archives in Shetland, contain a wealth of information about the German trade.[22] A thorough study of these sources awaits further research, but they have been used here in single cases. In particular the Court Books of Shetland, which have been preserved and edited for the years 1602–1604 and 1615–1629,[23] provide much evidence for the relations between German merchants and Shetlanders. Although projecting historical evidence backwards is a venture that should be undertaken with much caution, these seventeenth-century sources provide a great deal of information about phenomena that are not treated in earlier sources, and are therefore a welcome addition for this study.

There are also sources of a more structural nature. The most important of these are account books, of which there are two categories. The first are those

22 These were published in *SD* until 1637. John Ballantyne and Brian Smith have been kind enough to provide me their transcripts and summaries of unpublished sources for the period after 1637. See also Margaret D. Young, "Shetland History in the Scottish Records", in *Shetland and the Outside World 1469–1969*, ed. Donald J. Withrington, Aberdeen University Studies Series 157 (Oxford, 1983), 119–35.

23 Gordon Donaldson, ed., *The Court Book of Shetland, 1602–1604* (Edinburgh, 1958); *Court Book of Shetland, 1615–1629* (Lerwick, 1991) (hereafter cited in text as *CBS*). Regrettably, Robert S. Barclay, ed., *The Court Book of Orkney and Shetland, 1612–1613* (Kirkwall, 1962) and *The Court Book of Orkney and Shetland, 1614–1615* (Edinburgh, 1967) are mainly concerned with Orkney, and contain no references to the German trade.

of German merchants in Iceland, in which the debts of their Icelandic customers are listed. Two of these are extant, which coincidentally cover the same region: the debt book of the Oldenburg merchants in Kumbaravogur from 1585,[24] and that of Bremen merchant Clawes Monnickhusen in the same harbour from 1558 (Figure 3.6). The latter has been disregarded for a long time in the North Atlantic historiography, as it was wrongly catalogued as the account book of Bremen merchant Clawes Ficken in Norway until 2000.[25] Together they provide a great overview of the relations between German merchants and their Icelandic clientele in the sixteenth century. Moreover, the Bremen account book also lists debts in Bremen from the years 1562–1577, and therefore also gives us an impression of the market for Icelandic products in northern Germany.[26]

In the second category are the account books of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants in Hamburg, which was founded in 1500, and whose members included merchants in the city trading with the Faroes and Shetland as well.[27] These consist of two account books (1520–1561; 1562–1635), two donation registers (1533–1628; 1629–1657), a capital register (1543–1843), and two capital and interest registers (1573–1620; 1620–1639),[28] of which the first two are of primary importance for the study of the North Atlantic trade in Hamburg. The present work leans especially heavily on the first donation register,[29] which I will therefore introduce in more detail shortly.

After the Reformation, the confraternity introduced a system for funding its charitable activities, in which every person on each ship returning from the North Atlantic had to make a donation to the confraternity. Those who did not could not count on help from the confraternity in their old age or if beset by

24 SAO 262–1, no. 3 (15850000OLD00). See Ólafur S. Ásgeirsson, "Verzlunarbók af Snæfellsnesi frá 1585 : Íslandsverzlun Aldinborgarmanna á 16. öld" (master's thesis, Háskoli Íslands, 1971); Ásgeir Ásgeirsson and Ólafur S. Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms 1596–1845: kauphöfn og verslunarstaður* (Stykkishólmur, 1992).

25 SAB 7,2051 (15570000BRE00). See Adolf E. Hofmeister, "Das Schuldbuch eines Bremer Islandfahrers aus dem Jahre 1558: Erläuterung und Text", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 80 (2001): 23; "Das Schuldbuch eines Bremer Islandkaufmanns", in *Kirche – Kaufmann – Kabeljau: 1000 Jahre Bremer Islandfahrt*, ed. Adolf E. Hofmeister and Alfred Löhr, Kleine Schriften des Staatsarchivs Bremen 30 (Bremen, 2000), 47–54; Ludwig Beutin, "Alte bremische Handlungsbücher", Bremisches Jahrbuch 34 (1933): 118–119; Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 49–50.

26 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 24. See also Sections 6.3.5 and 7.4.1.

27 See Section 7.1.1.2.

28 SAH 612-2/5, nos. 1–4.

29 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00). See Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte."

financial problems.[30] These donations were recorded annually from 1533 onwards in a register, which list the persons active in the North Atlantic trade as well as the ships on which they sailed, often with their role on board and the harbour or region where they had come from indicated.[31]

The register therefore potentially provides us with an overview of all Hamburg ships trading in the North Atlantic region after 1533, and all persons on board. However, it is questionable whether these lists are complete. For example, the register probably does not list Hamburg ships returning to other ports, although their number can be considered negligible, as will become clear later. Moreover, a 1534 note in the register complains that only a few persons had delivered the lists of donations to be copied into the register, indicating that the practice took a while to become established. Only in the late 1540s does the number of ships indicated in the register become comparable with those listed in other sources. Neither can we be sure if the lists indicate every single person on board, nor whether the listed persons actually sailed with the ships.[32] Occasional donations from one person on more than one ship per year, an admonition that those who did not make a donation could not count on financial help, and the entries of ships with only one or two donations made by persons on board suggest that we have to be careful in individual cases. Also, in the case of donations from islanders or Danish officials, we can not readily assume that they travelled on the ships themselves.[33] With these reservations in mind, the register is, at least for the years 1544–1602, "reasonably complete, and in any case [. . .] the most complete that we have",[34] and therefore an invaluable source for an analysis of the North Atlantic trade in the sixteenth century. For the period after 1602, the structure of the register becomes more and more unclear, especially in the second volume, which limits its usability for our purposes.

Other administrative sources such as toll registers have proved to be of only marginal value. The problem is that they have often survived in incomplete form, are not clearly organised, or do not record enough information for a

30 See Section 7.1.1.2.

31 Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 16–17.

32 Ehrenberg, 18; Bart Holterman, "Size and Composition of Ship Crews in German Trade with the North Atlantic Islands", in *German Voyages to the North Atlantic Islands (c.1400–1700)*, ed. Natascha Mehler, forthcoming.

33 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, who has traced Icelanders who travelled to Hamburg, has shown that in most cases, entries of Icelanders in the register can indeed be linked to actual voyages.

34 Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 18.

study of the North Atlantic trade, so that they permit the making of general statements only. For example, oftentimes it is not mentioned where ships were coming from, as in the 1485–1486 lists of the Hamburg and Lübeck *Pfundgeld*, a toll to pay for the fight against assumed pirates. In these registers the transport of Icelandic fish is indicated, but it is not clear whether the fish came directly from Iceland or via Bergen.[35] The register of the custom duties levied on long-distance trade in Bremen (*Kaufmannsakzise*) of 1539/40 also mentions fish from Iceland and Shetland, which allows us to conclude that it made up a significant share of the city's trade, but it does not say much about the North Atlantic trade, as only exports were taxed.[36] Therefore, these records have been used where useful, but do not play a central role.

The last sources worth mentioning here are contemporary narrative geographical and ethnographic descriptions of the North Atlantic islands, such as Olaus Magnus' famous *Carta Marina* (1539), a map of northern Europe, and his "Description of the Northern Peoples" (*Historia de Gentibus septentrionalibus*, 1555), which can be considered a written explanation of the map. They contain highly detailed information about northern Europe at the time, especially with regard to the Icelandic context. It should be noted, though, that Magnus, the brother of the archbishop-elect of Uppsala, was living in exile in Venice and Rome at the time of their creation. The works are therefore compilations of descriptions by classical authors and information gathered by others, and contain little personal experience.[37]

By contrast, the already mentioned Low German poem "About Iceland" by Gories Peerse, first printed in Hamburg in 1561, is presumably predominantly based on personal experience.[38] His description of Iceland covers the environment,

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35 Dennis Hormuth, Carsten Jahnke, and Sönke Loebert, eds., *Die Hamburgisch-Lübischen Pfundgeldlisten 1485–1486*, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Staatsarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg 21 (Hamburg, 2006).

36 SAB 2–R.2.A.a.2.b.2., with a register of Afred Schmidtmayer (2–ad 2-R.2.A.a.2.b.2.). Adolf E. Hofmeister, "Sorgen eines Bremer Shetlandfahrers: Das Testament des Cordt Folkers von 1543", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 94 (2015): 50–51; Alfred Schmidtmayer, "Zur Geschichte der bremischen Akzise", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 37 (1937): 73; Jürgen von Witzendorff, "Bremens Handel im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 44 (1955): 167.

37 Peter Foote, "Introduction", in *Description of the Northern Peoples, Rome 1555*, by Olaus Magnus, ed. Peter Foote, trans. Peter Fisher and Humphrey Higgens, vol. 1, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, Second Series 182 (London, 1996), xxvi–xxxvi.

38 Oswald Dreyer-Eimbcke, "Ein Hamburger berichtet im 16. Jahrhundert als Augenzeuge aus Island", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 3.1 (1997): 46; after Richard Carstensen, "Ein Hamburger berichtet von Island", *Hamburgische Geschichts- und Heimatblätter* 12 (1940): 316–321. The oldest

the animals that populate the island, and the customs of its inhabitants. Gories Peerse was a merchant and skipper from Hamburg, as can be shown by his many appearances in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne between the 1540s and 1560s.[39] Peerse must therefore have had some experience of Iceland himself, and used this to write his short poem, which is written in easy-to-follow verses and does not refer to any other authors. This does, however, not mean that the work is neutral: it is obviously intended to deliver a certain exoticism that would appeal to the German public. Together with the strange natural phenomena, the curious cultural practices of the Icelanders, who for example washed their faces with the liquid from the bucket in which

copy is a reprint from 1594: Gories Peerse, *Van Ysslandt. Wat vor Egenschop, wunder und ardt des Volckes, der Deerte, Vögel und Vische, darsulvest gefunden werden*, 1594. A modern edition is Seelmann, "Gories Peerse"; Gert Kreutzer, "Gories Peerses ethnographisches Gedicht 'Van Ysslandt'", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 9.2 (2003): 15–26. The latter also includes a modern German translation (pp. 23–36). Other modern translations exist in Icelandic (Guðbrandur Jónsson, "Um Ísland", in *Glöggt er gests augað: úrval ferðasagna um Ísland*, ed. Sigurður Grímsson (Reykjavík, 1946), 19–28.), and an English translation – with many errors, however – can be found online: David Koester, "Translation of Gories Peerse's Van Yslandt, an Ethnographic Poem That Incited a Historiographic Revolution", accessed 12 July 2018, http://www.facultysite.sinanewt.on-rev.com/yslandt.pdf.

39 Friederike Christiane Koch, "Nachweise über die Islandfahrten von Gories Peerse", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 9.2 (2003): 27–28. A Gories Peerse from a younger generation is attested as skipper in the 1580s. Koch's assumption that Gories Peerse was a barber-surgeon on the Hamburg ships, however, has no factual basis; this assumption originates with Christoph Walter, "Die Hamburger Islandesfahrer. Zu Gories Dichtung", *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung* 9 (1883): 143–145. Walter assumed that Peerse was a barber based on his ability to write. There is, however, no reason to assume that a merchant or skipper could not write, given the existence of the already mentioned debt books (see also Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, "Schriftlichkeit und Handelsgesellschaften niederdeutsch-hansischer und oberdeutscher Kaufleute im späten 13. und im 14. Jahrhundert", in *Von Nowgorod bis London. Studien zu Handel, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im mittelalterlichen Europa. Festschrift für Stuart Jenks zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Marie-Luise Heckmann and Jens Röhrkasten, Nova Medievalia. Quellen und Studien zum europäischen Mittelalter 4 (Göttingen, 2008), 213–242.). Moreover, the short work does not bespeak an exceptionally learned author, as Peerse's verses are of a quite unpretentious nature. Koch also states that Peerse was from Holm in Pinneberg, which is based on Richard Ehrenberg, "Gorries Peers", *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 6.3 (1896): 428, who found evidence that the sons of Gories Peerse the Younger had inherited property in Holm/Pinneberg in the 1610s. This does not prove, however, that Gories himself was from there.

they had urinated during the night, must have fascinated the public, as the work was reprinted multiple times.[40]

The same goes for the descriptions of Dithmar Blefken (1607)[41] and David Fabricius (1616),[42] two authors whose connections to the North Atlantic trade are a bit more unclear. Blefken claimed to be a ship's preacher who went on a Hamburg ship to Iceland in 1563. His story is quite unbelievable, as he claims to have voyaged to Greenland as well, sailed back with Portuguese merchants, and to have travelled for five more years in North Africa. What is more, he states that years later he was robbed of his manuscript, which was miraculously returned to him before he managed to publish it in Leiden, more than 40 years after his journey.[43] Parts of his story seem to have been based on the works of Peerse and Olaus Magnus, but if he did not travel to Iceland himself, he must at least have been in close contact with the Hamburg merchants sailing there. For instance, the story about the finding of the horn of a unicorn (a narwhal tooth) in the drift ice by merchant Conradt Bloem in the winter of 1561 is confirmed by other sources.[44] Finally, David Fabricius, a preacher from East Frisia, wrote an account that is clearly based on Peerse and Blefken, but he might also very well have been in contact with the Oldenburg merchants in Iceland in the 1580s, and possibly received some of his information from them.[45]

Peerse's and Blefken's descriptions have become famous, as they provoked Icelandic scholar Arngrímur Jónsson "the Learned" to defend the honour of his home country in a somewhat exaggerated fashion. In his 1593 *Brevis commentarius de Islandia* ('Brief commentary on Iceland'), which is in Latin and full of references to classical authors, he attacked Peerse's work.[46] In addition, in 1612, Jónsson criticised Blefken's text in the *Anatome Blefkeniana* (Figure 1.2).

40 Kreutzer, "Gories Peerse", 16–17; Christina Deggim, "Gories Peerses Islandgedicht im Rahmen des deutschen Islandhandels im 16. Jahrhundert", *Island-Berichte der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V., Hamburg* 32, no. 3 (1991): 204–27.

41 Blefken, *Island*.

42 David Fabricius, *Island und Grönland zu Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Karl Tannen (Bremen, 1890).

43 Blefken, *Island*, 9–10.

44 See Section 2.5.

45 Fabricius, *Island und Grönland*, 5–8; Friederike Christiane Koch, "Gedanken um Pastor David Fabricius' Veröffentlichung über Island aus dem Jahre 1616 – zugleich ein Hinweis auf die Oldenburgische Islandfahrt", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 8.1 (2002): 62–63.

46 Arngrímur Jónsson, "Brevis commentarius de Islandia", in *The principal navigations, voyages, traffiques and discoveries of the English nation*, ed. Richard Hakluyt and Edmund Goldsmid, vol. 1: *Northern Europe* (Edinburgh, 1885), 185–340.

Figure 1.2: Arngrímur Jónsson's *Anatome Blefkeniana* (1612) included a woodcut of Dithmar Blefken as monkey. The image has become known as the first Icelandic cartoon.

However, rather than discouraging the circulation of these texts, Jónsson's critiques probably provoked renewed interest in them.[47] A reprint of Peerse appeared in 1594, and Blefken's Latin text was translated into German (1613) and Dutch (1652).[48] It is not hard to imagine that the success of these texts provided the incentive for Fabricius to write his own version. Due to the questionable factual value of these texts (which of course says nothing about their literary value), they will play a merely anecdotal role in the current study.

47 Hildegard Bonde, ed., *Hamburg und Island. Festgabe der Hamburger Staats-und Universitäts-Bibliothek zur Jahrtausendfeier des isländischen Allthings*. (Hamburg, 1930), 13–15; Kreutzer, "Gories Peerse", 18; Dreyer-Eimbcke, "Hamburger als Augenzeuge", 47; Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 95–97.
48 Blefken, *Island*, 13–14.

1.2 State of the art

The groundbreaking research about the North Atlantic trade was done by Ernst Baasch, who published his *Die Islandfahrt der Deutschen, namentlich der Hamburger, vom 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert* in 1889.[49] Extremely meticulously executed, the work is still referred to as the standard work about the North Atlantic trade.[50] As the title indicates, the work only covers the Iceland trade and predominantly focuses on Hamburg's role in it. Baasch relied primarily on the collection of letters concerning the Icelandic trade in the State Archives of Hamburg, as well as some other edited primary sources available at the time. His analyses of these sources are thorough and cautious, and he was careful not to speculate too much where the sources were thin. Based on the information available to him, he was able to create a thorough overview of the direct trade from Hamburg with Iceland in the Late Middle Ages. However, he was also a product of his time, and the work focussed mainly on national political history, celebrating German dominance over the English and Danes in Iceland.

Moreover, there are some lacunae in Baasch's research, such as the role of Lübeck and Bremen merchants, which were not addressed for a long time. Baasch announced a study of the Shetland trade,[51] but never finished it, and so the subject had to wait more than 80 years until Klaus Friedland published a study about the Hanseatic Shetland trade in 1973.[52] Prior to Friedland's publication, the first substantial addition to Baasch's work was Hamburg-themed as well: Richard Ehrenberg presented the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne in 1899 and provided a preliminary analysis.[53] Curiously, Baasch does not seem to have known of the register, or at least did not use it. Neither is it mentioned by Christoph Walter, who used the archival records of the confraternity in a short note about the person of Gories Peerse in an edition of his poem in 1883.[54] Another important early scholarly contribution was that of Dietrich

49 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*.

50 See, for example, Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*; Hofmeister, "Kaufleute auf Island", Philipp Grassel, "Die späthansezeitliche Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik vom 15. Jahrhundert bis zum 17. Jahrhundert. Das maritim-archäologische Potenzial hansischer Handelsplätze auf den Shetland Inseln, den Färöer Inseln und Island anhand archäologischer und historischer Quellen" (PhD thesis, Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel, 2017); Helgi Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", in *Líftaug landsins. Saga íslenskrar utanlandsverslunar 900–2010*, by Helgi Þorláksson, Gisli Gunnarsson, and Anna Agnarsdóttir, vol. 1 (Reykjavík, 2017), 21–206; and the present study.

51 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 95n3.

52 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel."

53 Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte."

54 Walter, "Die Hamburger Islandesfahrer."

Kohl, who studied the archival records in Oldenburg for his study, published in 1905, on the city's trade with Iceland in the last decades of the sixteenth century.[55]

The upsurge of nationalism in the 1930s, or as Richard Carstensen expressed it in 1940, a "feeling profoundly rooted in the essence of the German people" and a "desire which [had] lingered since ancient times on the bottom of the Germanic soul" to get to know the "legendary homeland of the Germanic blood",[56] helped to spark renewed interest in the North Atlantic trade. In 1930, Hildegard Bonde published the catalogue of an exhibition in Hamburg that explored the writings of Peerse, Blefken, and Arngrímur Jónsson.[57] This period also saw the first substantial contribution from Icelandic historiography, as Sigurður Skúlason published his history of Hafnarfjörður, the town that had been the most important harbour for the Hamburg merchants in Iceland, in 1933.[58] It was partially translated into German by Bonde in 1938.[59] Moreover, Bremen's trade with Iceland finally received some attention in Hermann Entholt and Ludwig Beutin's *Bremen und Nordeuropa* from 1937, which was, however, predominantly an edition of primary sources.[60]

After the Second World War, which brought independence from Denmark for Iceland and extended home rule for the Faroe Islands, the early trade connections with non-Danish continental Europe received renewed attention on these islands. The German trade with the Faroes was explored by Arnbjørn Mortensen in a 1955 publication celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the end of the Danish trade monopoly,[61] as well as by Louis Zachariasen in a long chapter in the meticulous "The Faroes as a legal community 1535–1655", published in 1961.[62] Unfortunately, both of these works offer many questionable interpretations of the primary

55 Kohl, "Der oldenburgisch-isländische Handel."

56 Carstensen, "Ein Hamburger berichtet von Island", 321.

57 Bonde, *Hamburg und Island*.

58 Sigurður Skúlason, *Saga Hafnarfjarðar* (Reykjavík, 1933).

59 Sigurður Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Islandhandels", trans. Hildegard Bonde, *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 63 (1938): 170–226.

60 Entholt and Beutin, *Bremen und Nordeuropa*, 51–62.

61 Johan K. Joensen, Arnbjørn Mortensen, and Poul Petersen, *Føroyar undir fríum handli í 100 ár: minnisrit um frígeving Føroya handils 1. januar 1856* (Tórshavn, 1955), 7–16.

62 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 161–183. The chapter has been recently translated into German by Detlef Wildraut as "Der Hamburghandel mit den Färöern in der Reformationszeit" (forthcoming).

sources. The Icelandic scholar Björn Þorsteinsson published an article about the German-Icelandic trade in 1957,[63] and in 1970 his dissertation on the English trade in Iceland in the fifteenth century appeared; this is also a key publication with regard to the history of the German trade, given the frequent clashes between English and German traders in Iceland in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[64] Moreover, the Scottish historian Gordon Donaldson published a thorough study of the Shetland court book from 1602–4, in which German traders are frequently mentioned.[65]

In German historiography, the North Atlantic trade came into focus again in the late 1960s and 1970s, as did the actors in that trade and their social position in the city of Hamburg. The latter theme was explored in a series of short articles by Hamburg archivist Kurt Piper, who used the records of the confraternity of Iceland merchants to compile lists of the leading figures within the confraternity, as well as of Hamburg's Faroese and Shetland merchants.[66] More-traditional nationalistic historiography was written by Kurt Forstreuter,[67] who took pains to find the earliest mentions of Germans in Iceland, and Klaus Friedland. As a result, Friedland's 1973 article, while laudable as the first thorough study of the German trade with Shetland, on closer inspection is marred by assumptions and wishful readings of the sources.[68] It was translated into English

63 Björn Þorsteinsson, "Island", in *Det nordiske syn på forbindelsen mellem Hansestæderne og Norden: Det Nordiske Historikermøde i Århus 7.–9. august 1957*, ed. Vagn Dybdahl, 2nd ed. (Aarhus, 1972), 165–195.

64 Björn Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin í sögu Íslendinga* (Reykjavik, 1970).

65 Gordon Donaldson, *Shetland Life under Earl Patrick* (Edinburgh, 1958).

66 Kurt F. C. Piper, "Die Kirche der hamburgischen Islandfahrer in Hafnarfjördur", *Hamburgische Geschichts- und Heimatblätter* 21 (1965): 227–232; "Urkundliche Nachweise über die Buxtehuder Islandfahrt (1577–1581)", *Stader Jahrbuch* NF, 57 (1967): 145–146; "Zur Geschichte der St. Annenkapelle der Hamburger Petrikirche: von 1521 bis 1535 Andachtsraum der Hamburger Islandfahrer", *Hamburgische Geschichts- und Heimatblätter* 8, no. 6/8 (1969): 167–175; "Die Beziehungen der Hamburger Islandfahrer zum Dominikanerkloster St. Johannis", *Die Heimat* 6 (1969): 179; "Die Armenwohnungen der Hamburger Islandfahrer-Brüderschaft in der Rosenstraße", *Hamburgische Geschichts- und Heimatblätter* 9, no. 1 (1971): 1–3; see also the overviews in SAH 741–2: *Verzeichnis der tätigen Mitglieder der St. Annen-Brüderschaft der Islandfahrer zu Hamburg 1500–1657*, 1986; *Verzeichnis der Hamburger Färoerfahrer 1543–1593*, 1988; *Verzeichnis der Hamburger Shetland- (Hitland-) fahrer 1547–1646*, 1988; *Geistliche an der Kirche der Hamburger Islandfahrer in Hafnarfjörður/Südwest-Island 1538–1603*, 1990.

67 Kurt Forstreuter, "Zu den Anfängen der hansischen Islandfahrt", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 85 (1967): 111–119; "Zu den Anfängen der hansischen Islandfahrt. Ein Nachtrag", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 86 (1968): 77–79.

68 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel."

and published in the 1983 volume *Shetland and the Outside World 1469–1969*,[69] which has formed the basis for subsequent English-language scholarship on the topic, such as Hance D. Smith's *Shetland Life and Trade* (1984).[70]

Since the 1990s, research has mainly focused on the actors of the North Atlantic trade, with the exception of Helge bei der Wieden's examination of the role of Lübeck in the Icelandic trade, the first thorough treatment of that specific city, more than a century after the publication of Baasch's *Islandfahrt der Deutschen*.[71] Worth mentioning is the wonderfully meticulous dissertation of Friederike Koch on Icelanders in Hamburg in the sixteenth century (1995), for which she made extensive use of the donation register of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants.[72] The book provides a wealth of material for researchers of the North Atlantic trade, as well as a new perspective on intercultural exchange during the direct German trade with the North Atlantic. In addition, Adolf Hofmeister published an analysis and edition of the 1557 account book determined to be that of the Icelandic trade of Bremen merchant Clawes Monnickhusen around the turn of the twenty-first century, as well as a recent article about testaments of Bremen Shetland merchants, which provide additional material on the relations between German merchants and islanders.[73] In terms of work by Icelandic scholars, Ólafur Ásgeirsson published the findings in 1992 from his 1971 master's thesis about the similar account book of the Oldenburg merchants in Iceland in a volume about the history of Stykkishólmur.[74]

During the last decade, archaeologists, notably Mark Gardiner and Natascha Mehler, have pushed the study of the late medieval German trade in the North Atlantic in new directions. Gardiner and Mehler have explored and excavated

69 Klaus Friedland, "Hanseatic Merchants and Their Trade with Shetland", in *Shetland and the Outside World 1469–1969*, ed. Donald J. Withrington, Aberdeen University Studies Series 157 (Oxford, 1983), 86–95.

70 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*.

71 Helge Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt vom 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 74 (1994): 9–30. Friedland had done some preliminary work on the topic: Klaus Friedland, "Lübeck und Island: Die ältere Islandschiffahrt Lübecks", in *Mensch und Seefahrt zur Hansezeit*, ed. Antjekathrin Graßmann, Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, and Hans-Dieter Loose, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte NF 42 (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar, 1995), 158–164.

72 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*.

73 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2000"; "Schuldbuch 2000"; "Sorgen."

74 Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, which is based on Ásgeirsson, "Verzlunarbók."

many sites on the Faroes, Shetland, and Iceland.[75] Some of these sites were had already been explored by Icelandic and German archaeologists, as early as 1907;[76] Mehler and Gardiner for their part adopted a more "Hanseatic" approach, asking questions about how we can detect the presence of German traders in the North Atlantic in the archaeological material. Working on a period for which written sources are available but often scarce, these archaeologists have recognised the great value of using different types of sources, thereby opening a new much-needed field of interdisciplinary research in late medieval North Atlantic historiography. The topic has also attracted the interest of underwater and ship archaeologists in recent years, such as Philipp Grassel, whose dissertation from 2017 has provided the groundwork for an exploration of the maritime archaeological potential on the North Atlantic islands, which might lead to important new directions in the study of the North Atlantic trade.[77]

1.3 Methods, theory, and terminology

The current study is first and foremost a critical and comprehensive re-examination of the North Atlantic trade with a focus on the organisational forms and the actors and their networks, both at home and on the islands. Given the new directions taken in research in recent decades, and the analysis and publication of hitherto-unused sources, both from the archival and the archaeological records, the current work will start with an examination and contextualisation of these sources. Moreover, I will analyse the historical context with extreme care in order to do justice to the complexity of the North Atlantic trade, in an attempt to move away from the many assumptions that underlay past research, often without a clear factual basis. This also means that I have avoided the use of a clear theoretical model, which would carry the risk of approaching the subject from too one-sided a perspective.

75 See, for example, Mark Gardiner and Natascha Mehler, "English and Hanseatic Trading and Fishing Sites in Medieval Iceland: Report on Initial Fieldwork", *Germania* 85 (2007): 385–427; Natascha Mehler and Mark Gardiner, "On the Verge of Colonialism: English and Hanseatic Trading Sites in the North Atlantic Islands", in *Exploring Atlantic Transitions: Archaeologies of Permanence and Transition in New Found Lands*, ed. Peter Pope and Sharon Lewis-Simpson (Woodbridge, 2013), 1–14.

76 See the overview of archaeology in Iceland in Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites."

77 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik." See also Ragnar Edvardsson and Philipp Grassel, "The Potential of Underwater Archaeology in the North Atlantic", in *German Voyages to the North Atlantic Islands (c.1400–1700)*, forthcoming.

However, the current study does touch upon a number of theoretical concepts that require a bit of elaboration. The first of these is the network. Social networks, which describe the relations between actors rather than the individual actors themselves, first emerged as a theoretical concept in sociology in the early twentieth century. In recent decades they have gained in significance as an analytical model in socioeconomic historiography.[78] In Hanseatic research especially, the concept of networks has helped historians move away from a rigid concept of the Hanse as a hierarchically and structurally organised "league" of cities, and to incorporate its inner dynamics and discrepancies. The success of the Hanse as an organically grown organisation without a clearly defined structure or statutes is now attributed to its functioning as a dynamic social network, which facilitated the exchange of information, helped to build up trust in commercial transactions, and as such reduced transaction costs.[79]

Methods for structural social network analysis that were developed in the second half of the twentieth century have been applied successfully in historical analysis as well.[80] By displaying the members of a certain group as "nodes" with the connections between them, it is possible to make statements about the structure of the network and to identify critical points, central actors, or the formation of cliques within a network.[81] In relation to the topic at hand, the most valuable of these studies has been Mike Burkhardt's analysis of the networks of Hanseatic merchants trading with Bergen.[82] By applying techniques of social network analysis to the community of Hanseatic *Bergenfahrer*, he has shown structural changes in the commercial relations between the merchants over time, such as the decline in importance of family relations within

78 Mike Burkhardt, *Der hansische Bergenhandel im Spätmittelalter: Handel – Kaufleute – Netzwerke* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2009), 40–43; John Scott, *Social Network Analysis. A Handbook*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles, 2000), 7–37.

79 Selzer and Ewert, "Verhandeln und verkaufen"; Stephan Selzer and Ulf Christian Ewert, "Netzwerke im europäischen Handel des Mittelalters. Konzepte – Anwendungen – Fragestellungen", in *Netzwerke im europäischen Handel des Mittelalters*, ed. Gerhard Fouquet and Hans-Jörg Gilomen (Ostfildern, 2010), 21–47; Ulf Christian Ewert and Stephan Selzer, *Institutions of Hanseatic Trade. Studies on the Political Economy of a Medieval Network Organisation* (Frankfurt am Main, 2016), 29–57; Zeilinger and Kleingärtner, *Raumbildung durch Netzwerke?*; Jenks, "Transaktionskostentheorie."

80 E.g. Mark Häberlein, *Brüder, Freunde und Betrüger. Soziale Beziehungen, Normen und Konflikte in der Augsburger Kaufmannschaft um die Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Colloquia Augustana 9 (Berlin, 1998); see also Selzer and Ewert, "Netzwerke", 23.

81 Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 63–81.

82 Burkhardt, *Hansische Bergenhandel*.

the network in favour of more risky short-term business relations in the fourteenth to the sixteenth century.[83]

However, the application of methods of social network analysis in historical research needs to be undertaken with caution. Apart from problems with the identification of membership of a certain group, there is a large source problem. Social network analysis is most effective when it can map all connections between all involved actors at a given point in time. In historical research, however, sources are often incomplete or lacking for periods of time and one cannot be sure to have covered the entire network, a problem that grows more acute the further back in time one goes. Burkhardt's study would not have been possible without the large body of published testaments of *Bergenfahrer* in which the connections between the actors can be clearly traced. For the North Atlantic trade, such data are not yet available. Therefore, the current study will first and foremost be concerned with identifying the actors through a personal historical or prosopographical approach, and thus compiling an initial overview of the community of North Atlantic merchants.[84] I should also note that since the sources mention the actors in the early phase of the North Atlantic trade (the late fifteenth century) only very irregularly, this research will predominantly focus on the period after *c*. 1530. Statements about the structure and role of the networks of these merchants, both in the North Atlantic and at home, will therefore be predominantly based on a qualitative analysis of the sources rather than on a structural approach.

The application of social network theory to historical research has been paralleled by the introduction and exploration, in economics, of theories that account for the interaction and in particular the cooperation between actors. Particularly relevant are the ideas of the "New Institutional Economics" which came into vogue in the 1990s: as the name suggest, they take up the role of institutions (formal and informal organisations, laws, conventions, etc.) in historical economic development.[85] Scholars have applied this analytical lens in Hanseatic historiography, for example in investigating the role of the Hanseatic network in reducing transaction costs.[86] Even with such mechanisms in place to facilitate trade, it was inevitable that disputes would arise between the involved parties. Thus methods of conflict resolution, such as legal security and

83 Burkhardt, 363–365.

84 Cf. Burkhardt, 31–34.

85 Selzer and Ewert, "Netzwerke", 27; Ewert and Selzer, *Institutions of Hanseatic Trade*, 11–28.

86 Jenks, "Transaktionskostentheorie"; Christina Link and Diana Kapfenberger, "Transaktionskostentheorie und hansische Geschichte: Danzigs Seehandel im 15. Jahrhundert im Licht seiner volkswirtschaftlichen Theorie", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 123 (2005): 153–170.

access to legal institutions, were essential for merchants if they wanted to expand their long-distance trade.[87] Historians have examined these and more recently the strategies of conflict management that were used, both for the resolution of conflicts and to avoid conflicts altogether or to minimise the negative effects of ongoing conflicts. Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz has for example underscored the role of the Hanse as an institution for conflict management.[88] Although not its primary focus of the current work, this line of scholarly thinking does inform the present study.

Finally, the term *Hanse* or *Hanseatic* deserves some attention. Ever since scholars turned their attention to the Hanse in the nineteenth century, there has been discussion about what the Hanse was exactly and how it could be defined. Even though the view on the Hanse has changed over time, as indicated above, there is no scholarly consensus about what the Hanse encompassed. The North Atlantic trade seems to have been located in a grey area of what can still be called Hanseatic trade: on the one hand, it was dominated by merchants from cities that considered themselves without a doubt as part of the Hanse, until far beyond the period under discussion: Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck. On the other hand, the direct trade relations between these cities and the North Atlantic islands circumvented the Bergen staple and therefore damaged the position of the Hanseatic *Kontor* and its privileges in Norway, which was one of the foundations of the Hanseatic structure.[89] Moreover, the North Atlantic trade also involved merchants from cities like Oldenburg, traditionally not considered a Hanseatic city, which would be an argument against labelling the German trade in the North Atlantic as Hanseatic.

Although the North Atlantic trade is therefore certainly an appropriate topic for a discussion about the nature of the Hanse, especially considering the latter's restructuring during the sixteenth century,[90] the present work is not the place for such a discussion as it is not essential for or possibly even hindering a proper understanding of the workings of the North Atlantic trade. I will therefore

87 See Alain Wijffels, "Introduction: Commercial Quarrels – and How Not to Handle Them", *Continuity and Change* 32 (2017): 1–9; Louis Sicking, "Introduction: Maritime Conflict Management, Diplomacy and International Law, 1100–1800", *Comparative Legal History* 5 (2017): 1–14; Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, "Mercantile Conflict Resolution and the Role of the Language of Trust: A Danzig Case in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century", *Historical Research* 88 (2015): 417–440.

88 Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, "The Late Medieval and Early Modern Hanse as an Institution of Conflict Management", *Continuity and Change* 32 (2017): 59–84.

89 Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 124, 318.

90 See Rolf Hammel-Kiesow and Stephan Selzer, eds., *Hansischer Handel im Strukturwandel vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert*, Hansische Studien 25 (Trier, 2016); Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 408–476.

avoid the term Hanseatic unless there is a clear Hanseatic context, such as a Hanseatic Diet or when the sources refer to the Hanse themselves. In most cases, the sources refer to these merchants as 'Germans' (*dudesche*, *teutsche*, or from the Shetland point of view: *Dutche*),[91] and so I will do likewise. Moreover, I will follow Rolf Hammel-Kiesow's terminology: the "North Atlantic trade" in the present work refers to the German trade with Iceland, Shetland, and the Faroes, which was not conducted via Bergen.[92]

91 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 12.
92 Hammel-Kiesow, "Politik", 184.

Part I: **Historical background**

Figure 1.3: *Carta Marina* (1539) of Olaus Magnus, section showing Iceland.

2 Economic background: Traded commodities

The *Carta Marina*, the map of Scandinavia made in 1539 by Olaus Magnus, has become famous for its depictions of the many mythical creatures and sea monsters inhabiting the waters around Scandinavia.[1] However, if we take a close look at the the part of the map depicting Iceland (Figure 1.3), it shows a surprising amount of details regarding the commercial activities in the sixteenth-century North Atlantic. Next to the ships from various German ports lying at anchor, sailing the Icelandic waters, or doing battle with ships from other nations,[2] the map gives us a nice overview of the insular products the German merchants were after. We see a pile of stockfish (marked G) on the southern coast, volcanic sources with sulphur deposits (B), butter produced in the monastery of Helgafell (H), and white falcons in the north (D). The following chapter will discuss these commodities in detail.

2.1 Fish

2.1.1 Stockfish

The driving force behind the trade with the North Atlantic was stockfish, which was so central to the Icelandic economy that it appeared on the country's coat of arms, as we can see on the *Carta Marina* (Figure 1.3), as well as that of the city of Bergen.[3] Stockfish is air-dried fish made from species of the cod family (*Gadidae*), typically cod (*Gadus morhua*), but other species were used as well. The stockfish made of ling (*Molva molva*), which was abundant in the waters around Shetland, was considered especially tasty,[4] and according to a sale

1 See Olaus Magnus, *Die Wunder des Nordens*, ed. Elena Balzamo and Reinhard Kaiser (Frankfurt am Main, 2006); Kurt Brunner, "Ein Kartenwerk der Nordlande vom Jahre 1539", *Deutsches Schiffahrtsarchiv* 12 (1989): 173–194; Heinrich Erkes, "Island im Lebenswerk des Olaus Magnus", *Mitteilungen der Islandfreunde* 17 (1930): 74–87.

2 See Section 3.3.

3 Steinar Imsen, "Royal Dominion in the 'Skattlands'", in *Rex Insularum. The King of Norway and His 'Skattlands' as a Political System c. 1260–c. 1450*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Bergen, 2014), 38.

4 Angelika Lampen, *Fischerei und Fischhandel im Mittelalter: Wirtschafts- und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen nach urkundlichen und archhäologischen Quellen des 6. bis 14. Jahrhunderts im Gebiet des Deutschen Reiches* (Husum, 1997), 142–143; Burkhardt, *Hansischer Bergenhandel*, 141; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 19.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-002

contract from 1552 was worth double the value of cod.[5] The drying process without the additional use of salt requires specific climatic conditions, specifically long winters, so it could only be produced in northern Scandinavia and the North Atlantic islands.[6] The result is an exceptionally hard fish, which requires a thorough pounding and a couple of days of soaking in water before it can be cooked and eaten, but which also has an extremely long shelf life.[7] It was often not considered particularly palatable.[8] Marx Rumpolt, the chef of the Archbishop-Elector of Mainz, sums it up nicely in his 1581 cookbook, when he remarks after his list of stockfish recipes that "although many dishes can be made with it, it is just a stockfish, and it remains a stockfish [. . .] and it is not worth the effort".[9]

2.1.1.1 Consumption

The popularity of stockfish as a commodity on the European continent was based on it not being perishable. Along with salted herring, it could be transported over large distances and thus be traded in large quantities. Consequently herring and stockfish were the most affordable kinds of fish; (fresh) fish was in most instances more expensive than meat, making the former a luxury foodstuff

5 SAH 211–2, G 21: Contract of 10 October 1552, in which English merchant Thomas Daye promises to buy the Shetlandic fish delivered to him by German merchants, "dath hundert lengen vor 4 punth sterlings, unde den dorsch vor 2 punth" ('a hundred ling for £4, and cod for £2'). However, note that this contract refers to salted dried fish, i.e. not stockfish proper. See also Sections 2.1.3 and 7.2.3.

6 James H. Barret, "Medieval Sea Fishing, AD 500–1550: Chronology, Causes and Consequences", in *Cod & Herring. The Archaeology of Medieval Sea Fishing*, ed. James H. Barret and David C. Orton (Oxford, 2016), 4.

7 One of the etymological explanations for the name "stockfish" (from German/Dutch *stock* 'stick'), is that it was hard as a stick. Another explanation is that it was hung from horizontal poles (Old Norse: *stokkr*) during the production. Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, "Fish, Stock and Barrel. Changes in the Stockfish Trade in Northern Europe, c. 1360–1560", in *Beyond the Catch. Fisheries of the North Atlantic, the North Sea and the Baltic, 900–1850*, ed. Louis Sicking and Darlene Abreu-Ferrera, The Northern World 41 (Leiden, 2008), 190.

8 Wubs-Mrozewicz, 188.

9 "Unnd wenn man noch so viel von einem Stockfisch sol zurichten / so ists doch nur ein Stockfisch / und bleibt ein Stockfisch [. . .] Unnd man kan viel Speiß von dem Stockfisch zurichten / es ist aber der mühe nicht wehrt". Marx Rumpolt, *Ein new Kochbuch, Das ist Ein grundtliche beschreibung wie man recht und wol, nicht allein von vierfussigen, heymischen und wilden Thieren*. . . (Frankfurt am Main, 1581), cxxxiii, no. 12.

for the most part.[10] As a source of protein, stockfish could be used as a substitute for meat or other animal products as an essential part of the human diet. Especially in towns, which did not produce enough food for their populations and depended on imports, preservable sources of protein such as stockfish were in high demand.[11]

In discussions about the demand for stockfish in continental Europe, the influence of the church with its many fasting days, up to 150 days a year, is often emphasised. On fasting days it was forbidden to eat meat or even other animal products such as eggs or foods made from milk, but it was permitted to eat fish. The degree of direct impact of religious practices on the consumption of fish, however, is questionable. Since the prices of both meat and fish were relatively high, the diet of the majority of people must have consisted of grain and legumes most of the time, including fasting days. This even goes for some monasteries, which are usually seen as important consumers of fish, as not all had the means to dish up meat or fish every day.[12] Moreover, fasting rules were reconsidered as part of the Reformation, yet there was no noticeable effect on the consumption pattern of fish, which in fact was already experiencing a slow decline.[13]

Stockfish seems to have become culturally associated to some degree with central and southern Germans. In the cookbook *Registrum coquine* of Jean of Bockenheim (1417–1431), stockfish is considered a typical dish for Thuringians, Hessians, and Swabians.[14] There is indeed much evidence for stockfish consumption in central Germany,[15] for example in sixteenth-century transport

10 Lampen, *Fischerei und Fischhandel*, 37–40; Johanna Maria van Winter, "Nahrungsmittel in den Niederlanden im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert", in *Nahrung und Tischkultur im Hanseraum*, ed. Günter Wiegelmann and Ruth-E. Mohrmann, Beiträge zur Volkskultur in Nordwestdeutschland 91 (Münster, New York, 1996), 303–18; Manfred Straube, "Nahrungsmittelhandel im thüringisch-sächsischen Raum zu Beginn der frühen Neuzeit", in the same volume, 59–60, has shown that for example in Wittenberg, fish was much less consumed than formerly assumed, and argues that this was mainly because it was expensive.

11 See Angelika Lampen, "Stadt und Fisch: Konsum, Produktion und Handel im Hanseraum der Frühzeit", *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 87 (2000): 281–307.

12 Lampen, *Fischerei und Fischhandel*, 64–80.

13 C. M. Woolgar, "'Take This Penance Now, and Afterwards the Fare Will Improve': Seafood and Late Medieval Diet", in *England's Sea Fisheries. The Commercial Sea Fisheries of England and Wales since 1300*, ed. David J. Starkey, Chris Reid, and Neil Ashcroft (London, 2000), 44.

14 Johanna Maria van Winter, "Visrecepten in laat-middeleeuwse en vroeg-moderne kookboeken", in *Vis. Stillevens van Hollandse en Vlaamse meesters 1550–1700*, ed. Liesbeth M. Helmus (Utrecht, 2004), 147.

15 Heinrich Bechtel, *Wirtschaftsstil des deutschen Spätmittelalters* (Munich and Leipzig, 1930), 102–104.

records in Erfurt, which regularly list stockfish. Regrettably, these records do not indicate in which region the fish was caught. They do record from where the stockfish was transported, which were often inland cities, indicating that the product was moving from the North Sea ports into southern Germany through a chain of middlemen.[16] For Cologne, a major staple market for stockfish, herring, and other fishes in the Rhine area, the sources are clearer. Here Icelandic stockfish is first mentioned in 1530, having been brought by merchants from Bremen, Amsterdam, and Deventer.[17] Furthermore, according to 1514 complaints from Bergen, in southwestern Germany mills were developed to pound stockfish mechanically in order to soften it, making the purchase of the harder Icelandic stockfish a more attractive option.[18] This statement is hard to validate, however, due to a lack of sources about stockfish mills.[19]

Another significant market for the German trade in stockfish was England, and indeed this was one of the main reasons for the development of direct trade relations with the North Atlantic. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, German traders competed directly with English traders by bringing stockfish, both from Bergen and the North Atlantic islands, to the English markets, as will be shown below.[20] The importance of such imports for England, especially in larger cities like York and London, has been confirmed in archaeozoological data, which clearly show greater levels of imported stockfish in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, whereas in earlier centuries most of the fish consumed had come from local waters.[21]

That said, the importance of stockfish for German coastal regions should not be underestimated.[22] There are strong indications that a large portion of the

16 Manfred Straube, *Geleitswesen und Warenverkehr im thüringisch-sächsischen Raum zu Beginn der Frühen Neuzeit*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommision für Thüringen, Kleine Reihe 42 (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2015), 170–175.

17 Bruno Kuske, "Der Kölner Fischhandel vom 14.–17. Jahrhundert", *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst* 24 (1905): 267–268. Deventer merchants are not known for having traded directly with Iceland, and for Amsterdam the sources are very scarce. It is therefore likely that these merchants acquired the Icelandic stockfish in other markets, e.g. in Bergen, Hamburg, Bremen, or London.

18 Friedrich Bruns, *Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer und ihre Chronistik*, Hansische Geschichtsquellen, n. F., Bd. 2 (Berlin, 1900), 211–213.

19 See Wubs-Mrozewicz, "Fish, Stock and Barrel", 197–98; Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 211–213.

20 See Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

21 David C. Orton et al., "Fish for the City: Meta-Analysis of the Archaeological Cod Remains and the Growth of London's Northern Trade", *Antiquity* 88 (2014): 516–530.

22 See also Lampen, "Stadt und Fisch", for an analysis of the fish markets in Hamburg, Lübeck, and Cologne, among others.

North Atlantic fish was sold in the direct vicinity of the harbour cities. Although the archaeozoological data for this era in Germany have not been subject to as thorough an analysis as the data in England, what work has been done suggests similar consumption patterns in coastal cities in northern Germany as in English cities.[23] This is supported by written evidence as well. For example, in the 1578 statutes of the Hamburg *Fischweicher* (literally: 'fish soakers', i.e. the stockfish mongers; see Figure 2.1), it is stipulated that cod could only be sold on to other cities when the fishmongers had received enough, which should be seen as a measure to secure the stockfish supply for the city's population.[24] Account books of religious institutions and hospitals in German coastal cities also record the acquisition of considerable amounts of stockfish. For example, in Hamburg, Stephan Selzer estimates that dried fish in the hospital of St Elisabeth and St Georg at the end of the fifteenth century accounted for between 8.5 and 6% of the total expenditure for food,[25] and the account book of the beguines in Hamburg lists 1–8 barrels of *rotscher* as having been bought each year between 1482 and 1522.[26] The account books of the Hamburg Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants, moreover, do list the occasional sale of stockfish to merchants in inland cities such as Magdeburg, but more regularly the merchants are nearby, e.g. in Harburg or Lüneburg.[27] Similarly, the account book of Bremen merchant Clawes Monnickhusen shows that most of his customers lived in

23 Hans Christian Küchelmann, "Hanseatic Fish Trade in the North Atlantic: The Evidence of Fish Remains from Hanse Cities in Germany", in *German Trade in the North Atlantic, c. 1400–1700. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Natascha Mehler, Mark Gardiner, and Endre Elvestad, AmS-Skrifter 27 (Stavanger, 2019), 75–92.

24 SAH 611–8, no. 9, ff. 29–40; Otto Rüdiger, ed., *Die Ältesten Hamburgischen Zunftrollen Und Brüderschaftsstatuten* (Hamburg, 1874), 81: "Dar schall ock nemandt kabbelouwe koepen unde uthschepen, er de vischwekers des genoch hebben vor disse stadt." Similar regulations aimed at securing the fish supply for a city's population are attested for other coastal cities in northern Germany from the late fourteenth century, both for local fisheries as well as for imported herring. See Carsten Jahnke, "'Und ist der fisch- und Heringsfangh das Erste beneficium . . .' – Städtische und freie Markt-Fischerei im mittelalterlichen Ostseeraum", *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* 122 (1997): 293–294.

25 Stephan Selzer, "Verbraucherpreise und Verbrauchsgewohnheiten im spätmittelalterlichen Hamburg. Die Rechnungen des Huses Sunte Elizabeth von 1495 bis 1503", in *Hamburger Lebenswelten im Spätmittelalter. Untersuchungen an gedruckten und ungedruckten Quellen*, ed. Stephan Selzer and Benjamin Weidemann, Contributiones. Mittelalterforschung an der Helmut-Schmidt-Universität 2 (Münster, 2014), 20–21.

26 Klaus-Joachim Lorenzen-Schmidt, "Fischkonsum in einem Hamburger Großhaushalt 1504–1506", *Rundbrief des Arbeitskreises für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Schleswig-Holsteins* 111 (October 2013): 50–51.

27 SAH 612-2/5, 1, vols. 1 and 2.

Figure 2.1: The fish market in Hamburg with the benches of the stockfish mongers. Detail from a 1589 map of the city.

Bremen or in the villages around it, with Hoya, only 40 km up the Weser river, being one of the furthest places.[28] Moreover, the Counts of Oldenburg and the Archbishop of Bremen were major customers of Icelandic stockfish in Bremen. In fact, they tried to acquire licences of their own for harbours in Iceland in the 1580s, claiming that they needed to supply their courts and castles with fish.[29]

Stockfish was also important as a foodstuff on ships and for military forces, due to its long shelf life.[30] According to Olaus Magnus, preserved fish was "used extensively by the army as an essential commodity during sieges and

28 SAB 7, 2051, ff. 17r–33r: debts in Bremen, *c.* 1560–1577 (15570000BRE00).
29 NLO 20, -25, no. 6: Count John VII of Oldenburg's request for a licence for Kumbaravogur, 29 October 1579 (15791029OLD00); SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Archbishop Henry III's request for a licence for Ríf, 12 June 1583 (15830612BRV00); see also Section 3.5.5.
30 Lampen, *Fischerei und Fischhandel*, 64–80.

campaigns".[31] Ursula Bäumker's research has shown that this was indeed the case for the troops of the bishop of Cologne in 1448–49, who consumed stockfish on 82 out of 329 days, which accounted for around a third of the expenses and consumption of fish by the troops.[32] This is also reflected in the North Atlantic trade. For example, the fleet fitted out by Lübeck against Sweden in 1532 was supplied with Icelandic stockfish.[33] And Johan Jellesen Falckner, the Danish factor in Amsterdam who was also involved in supplying sailing equipment and explosives for the Danish fleet, was ordered to buy Faroese stockfish for the Danish king in 1565 and 1566, probably for the supply of the troops on warships.[34]

2.1.1.2 Production

There were a few basic methods of producing stockfish in the period under study, which continue to be used in the present day. The most common method was called *rundfisch*: after being beheaded and gutted, fish were hung in pairs from wooden structures (Figure 2.2). For *rotscher* (from Norw. *råskjær*), the spinal column was removed as well, and the fish was split in half. The latter method is especially suitable for fat fishes, as the fish dries more thoroughly.[35] In the sixteenth century, it became common to transport *rotscher* in barrels in order to increase transport volumes (Figure 2.3), and large wooden presses were constructed to press as much fish as possible into the barrels. In this procedure, the fish was cut to fit its container. The small bits and pieces that fell off were sold as *sporden*, which we find for example in the account book of Bremen merchant Clawes Monnickhusen.[36] Finally, for the production of *vlackfisch*, the fish was cut open at the belly and spread out to dry; this method was the least used, though it was the

31 Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus, Romæ 155 / Description of the Northern Peoples, Rome 1555*, ed. Peter Foote, trans. Peter Fisher and Humphrey Higgens, 3 vols, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, Second Series 182 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1996), 20:27 (vol. 3, p. 1059).

32 Ursula Bäumker, "'. . . men gaff allemenne genoech ind reedliken . . .' Zur Truppenverpflegung während der Soester Fehde (1448/49)", in *Nahrung und Tischkultur im Hanseraum*, ed. Günter Wiegelmann and Ruth-E. Mohrmann, Beiträge zur Volkskultur in Nordwestdeutschland 91 (Münster, New York, 1996), 224–227.

33 Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 201.

34 *KB* 1561–1565, p. 646; *KB* 1566–1570, p. 65. See Section 7.2.5.

35 Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, lxxvi; Küchelmann, "Hanseatic Fish Trade", 78–79.

36 SAB 7,2051, nos. 143, 144, 209, 216, 220, 229 (15570000BRE00).

Figure 2.2: Stockfish (*rundfisch*) drying in Gásir, Iceland. Photograph by Gunnar Hafdal (Wikimedia Commons).

Figure 2.3: A fish shop, from Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555). It shows (stock) fish packed in bundles as well as barrels.

preferred process in Shetland.[37] It is assumed that the fish was in this case dried on the rocky shores, a practice attested well into the twentieth century.[38]

In the Norwegian city of Bergen, which was the centre of the European stockfish trade in the Middle Ages, the Hanseatic merchants used an extensive system for grading stockfish according to quality and size. References to size classes are scarce in the North Atlantic trade, however. Only once in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne is *titling*, the smallest class of fish, mentioned.[39] There were probably two reasons for this: fish in Iceland served as a substitute for money, necessitating that their size be standardised; and German merchants trading directly with the North Atlantic circumvented the Bergen staple, so that fish was not subject to the Bergen *wrake* (quality control).

With regard to quality, Icelandic and Shetlandic stockfish (we almost never hear explicitly about Faroese fish[40]) seem to have been considered as forming a category of their own. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when Hanseatic merchants in Bergen faced increasing competition from their colleagues trading directly with the North Atlantic islands, there were frequent complaints about the North Atlantic stockfish. The Icelandic fish, also called *noptzen*,[41] was considered to be of lesser quality – i.e. harder – and therefore less expensive than the Norwegian fish.[42] Fraudulent merchants were supposedly

37 Lampen, *Fischerei und Fischhandel*, 143–144; Burkhardt, *Hansische Bergenhandel*, 141–143.

38 Alexander Fenton, *The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland* (Edinburgh, 1978), 579–580. This is supported by documents about the German booths in Shetland, which sometimes mention the use of the beach for the purpose of fish drying. See Sections 2.1.3 and 5.4.

39 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 328v (1587); Burkhardt, *Hansische Bergenhandel*, 141.

40 There is just one reference in the donation register (SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1), f. 317v: "Pferisch (en) f(isch)" (15330000HAM00). This seems to have merely been an indication of origin.

41 Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, lxxxi.

42 Wubs-Mrozewicz, "Fish, Stock and Barrel," 199–200. Another reason for the lower price of Icelandic fish was put forward in a 1514 Bergen complaint (Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 211–214.), in which it was stated that merchants could fit the same amount of Icelandic fish on three ships as on five ships in Bergen, which reduced transport costs. Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 199, 202–203, suggests that this was because the merchants used bigger ships in Iceland, but it is more likely that this had to do with the quality of the fish. If Icelandic fish were harder, they were probably also slightly thinner, which means that more fish would fit on the same ship than in Norway. Note that it is impossible to verify these claims about the lower price for Icelandic fish, as sales accounts for stockfish on the European continent almost never mention its origin: Herbert Hitzbleck, "Die Bedeutung des Fisches für die Ernährungswirtschaft Mitteleuropas in vorindustrieller Zeit unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Niedersachsens" (PhD thesis, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, 1971), 203.

mixing the insular fish with the Norwegian, thereby injuring the reputation of the latter.[43] This was a concern with Shetland stockfish as well, and as a result the Bergen *Kontor* took steps to prevent it from being mixed with Bergen fish. In 1494, the Hanseatic Diet decided that fish from Shetland should only be produced as *vlackvisch* and not as *rotscher*, so that the difference would be clearly visible.[44]

Although stockfish was no longer subject to the control of the Bergen *wrake* once the direct German trade with the North Atlantic islands was in full swing, German towns did make efforts to prohibit merchants from bringing poor-quality fish to the market. In Bremen, for example, a 1513 addition to the town law in the *Kundige Rolle* stipulated that stockfish from Bergen, Iceland, and Shetland must be clearly identified and kept separate at the point of sale.[45] There is no such entry from the 1489 version of the law. And when the Bremen fishmongers complained in 1619 that the fish brought from Shetland was mixed with old deteriorated fish, it was decided that two persons with experience in the Shetland trade should be appointed to check the imported fish for irregularities.[46] This happened by request of the Shetland merchants themselves.[47]

Although the Bergen system of different categories for stockfish was largely absent in the North Atlantic and the stockfish was usually being referred to as simply "fish", there are some terms in the sources that hint at categories of quality and production techniques specific to the North Atlantic. In the donation register and the account books of the Hamburg confraternity, *wester fisch* is mentioned in a few instances, which probably indicated fish from the Icelandic Westfjords.[48] Fish from this region therefore seems to have been regarded as a special kind, although it is unclear what exactly set it apart. Moreover, a document from 1477 refers to *stapelvisch* from Iceland as distinct from stockfish. This

43 *HR* III, 3, no. 353 §85.

44 "Item de Bergerfarer sollen ok nicht menghen Hithlander vysch mangkt den Bergerfisch, schollen ok mit ernste darvor wesen, dat de Hithlander visch moge gevlaket werden unnd nicht runt vor rothscher vorkofft". *HR* III, 3, no. 353, §153 (14940525BRE00); Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 78.

45 "Men schall ock Berger, Yslander, und Hidlander vysch, elcken under synen namen unde vor syne werde, vorkopen unde besunderen leggen yn de molden by der sulven broke". Ulrich Büttner, Konrad Elmshäuser, and Adolf E. Hofmeister, eds., *Die Kundige Rolle von 1489. Faksimile-Edition mit mittelniederdeutscher Transkription und hochdeutscher Übersetzung* (Bremen, 2014).

46 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: declaration of the city council of Bremen, 30 September 1619 (16190930BRE00).

47 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: letter of the Shetland merchants, 27 September 1619 (16190927BRE00).

48 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1, f. 446r (1602) (15330000HAM00); 1 vol. 2 (1568). Although the term is not explained, the 1568 entry concerns Johan Hylken's ship, which had returned from the Westfjords that year.

might refer to a practice known from Shetland in modern times, in which half-cured fish, which had been partially dried on the beach first, were piled up in stacks (*stapel*) until they were fully dried, probably to keep them flat.[49]

2.1.2 Fisheries in the North Atlantic

The high demand for stockfish on the European market had a profound influence on the economy in the Northern Atlantic, as it spurred the emergence of an export-oriented fishing industry. Specialised stockfish production for the export market was under way in the Lofoten archipelago in northern Norway before 1100, which expanded thanks to the development of fishing technology during the twelfth century that resulted in greater catches.[50] As early as Viking times, Lofoten-produced fish had found their way to mainland Europe, as recent DNA analysis of fish bones from Haithabu in northern Germany has shown.[51] Partly due to worsening climatic conditions, which made growing grain more difficult, the local economy changed from a combination of subsistence farming and fishing to a dependency on the import of foreign grain by exporting stockfish. However, it is hard to say whether this development was supply or demand driven; both factors likely worked in tandem.[52] Especially after the Hanseatic merchants established their *Kontor* in Bergen in the fourteenth century, the export-oriented fisheries must have become quite profitable for the fishermen, as is indicated by them paying higher taxes than the inland population, and by the costly church art in the region.[53]

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49 "viginti et sex Milibus Stokfisshe duobus Milibus Staplefisshe". *DI* 11:24; Fenton, *The Northern Isles*, 580–581 (including a photograph). Fenton describes the process for salting fish; see Section 2.1.3.

50 Arnved Nedkvitne, *The German Hansa and Bergen 1100–1600* (Cologne, 2014), 26, 28; James H. Barret et al., "Interpreting the Expansion of Sea Fishing in Medieval Europe Using Stable Isotope Analysis of Archaeological Cod Bones", *Journal of Archaeological Science* 30 (2011): 1–9; Barret, "Medieval Sea Fishing", 258.

51 Bastiaan Star et al., "Ancient DNA Reveals the Arctic Origin of Viking Age Cod from Haithabu, Germany", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 201710186 (7 August 2017), https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1710186114.

52 Thomas Riis, "Der Einfluß des hansischen Handels auf die Entwicklung der norwegischen Wirtschaft", in *Das Hansische Kontor zu Bergen und die Lübecker Bergenfahrer. International Workshop Lübeck 2003*, ed. Antjekathrin Graßmann, Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck 41 (Lübeck, 2005), 33; Barret et al., "Expansion of Sea-Fishing", 7–8.

53 Wubs-Mrozewicz, "Fish, Stock and Barrel", 203.

In Iceland, a similar development can be seen about a century later. In Icelandic historiography, the fourteenth century became known as the *Fiskveiðaöld* ('Fishing Age'), when stockfish were produced in growing numbers for export, in comparison to the preceding *Landbúnaðaröld* ('Agricultural Age'), when foreign trade was conducted in *wadmal*, train oil, and other products,[54] and fish was destined for the internal market only. The 1340s saw the export of stockfish grow considerably.[55] However, it seems that stockfish was already produced for export well before 1300, as seasonally occupied fishing settlements emerged around the most important fishing grounds near the Vestmannaeyjar, Reykjanes, Snæfellsnes, and the Westfjords.[56] The 1294 *Réttarbót*, an amendment to the Icelandic law code *Jónsbók*, states that not too much stockfish should be taken from the country in times of famine, clearly pointing to production for export.[57]

It is generally accepted that the Black Death epidemic in Norway in the middle of the fourteenth century led to a significant rise in stockfish prices, as many fishermen died and less stockfish was produced.[58] This also influenced the situation in Iceland (which was spared by the epidemic), where the export

54 See Section 2.5.

55 Patricia Pires Boulhosa, "Of Fish and Ships in Medieval Iceland", in *The Norwegian Domination and the Norse World c.1100–c.1400*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Trondheim, 2010), 175–176; Helgi Þorláksson, "Aristocrats between Kings and Tax-Paying Farmers: Iceland *c*.1280 to *c*.1450. Political Culture, the Political Actors and the Evidence of Sagas", in *Rex Insularum. The King of Norway and His 'Skattlands' as a Political System c. 1260–c. 1450*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Bergen, 2014), 293; Helgi Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser på Island i middelalderen", in *Urbaniseringsprosessen i Norden*, ed. Grethe Authén Blom, vol. 1: Middelaldersteder (Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø, 1977), 166; Marie Simon Thomas, *Onze IJslandsvaarders in de 17de en 18de eeuw: bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de Nederlandsche handel en visscherij* (Amsterdam, 1935), 6.

56 Boulhosa, "Fish and Ships", 184–190; Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 162, 176–177. The archaeology of fishing settlements in the Westfjords has been analysed by Ragnar Edvardsson: "Commercial and Subsistance Fishing in Vestfirðir. A Study in the Role of Fishing in the Icelandic Medieval Economy", *Archaeologia Islandica* 4 (2005): 49–67; and "The Role of Marine Resources in the Medieval Economy of Vestfirðir, Iceland" (PhD thesis, City University of New York, 2010). His findings suggest that export-oriented stockfish production was underway from an early time onwards. Orri Vésteinsson, "Commercial Fishing and the Political Economy of Medieval Iceland", in *Cod & Herring. The Archaeology of Medieval Sea Fishing*, ed. James H. Barret and David C. Orton (Oxford, 2016), 72–78, linked this development to changes in the Icelandic political structure, which became more dependent on exchange with Norway in the thirteenth century.

57 Boulhosa, "Fish and Ships", 192.

58 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 497–511; Wubs-Mrozewicz, "Fish, Stock and Barrel", 203; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 191.

of stockfish flourished in the 1380s because of the rising prices, although this growth was not sustainable, probably because of transport problems in the trade with Norway.[59] The Black Death did eventually hit Iceland in 1402–1404, likely via ships trading with the fishing settlements. It has recently been suggested that the large amounts of fish waste amassed on the sites of stockfish production provided an optimal food source for the rats spreading the plague bacteria.[60] As in Norway, stockfish prices rose significantly as a result, while prices for imported foreign grain declined.[61] The resulting shortage of Icelandic stockfish might have been one of the reasons that the English appeared in Iceland shortly after 1400. They had been largely driven out of Bergen, where the supply of stockfish to England was taken over by Hanseatic merchants.[62] However, when the English started to import fish directly from Iceland, they not only bought locally produced dried fish, but also fished before the coast themselves. This was no small-scale venture: more than 100 English vessels were active in Icelandic waters annually until well into the seventeenth century, and it has been estimated that around one-fifth of the total English shipping tonnage was involved in fishing in Iceland around 1500.[63]

Conversely, when German merchants established direct connections with Iceland in the course of the fifteenth century, they seem to have depended exclusively on the local fisheries. As timber for the construction of ships was scarce on the North Atlantic islands, they supplied fishing boats to the local fishermen, who thus became dependent on the merchants. It is thought that in the 1530s in particular a fishing fleet of considerable size operated from the harbours on Reykjanes, sponsored by Hamburg merchants.[64] Although the governor acted

59 Þorláksson, "Aristocrats", 293–294. See also Section 3.1.

60 Chris Callow and Charles Evans, "The Mystery of Plague in Medieval Iceland", *Journal of Medieval History* 42, no. 2 (2016): 254–284.

61 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 179.

62 See Section 3.3.

63 Anna Agnarsdóttir, "Iceland's 'English Century' and East Anglia's North Sea World", in *East Anglia and Its North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Bates and Robert Liddiard (Woodbridge, 2013), 209.

64 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 208–209; Jón J. Aðils, *Den Danske monopolhandel på Island, 1602–1787*, trans. Friðrik Ásmundsson Brekkan (Copenhagen, 1926), 27; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 60; Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 171. Gories Peerse mentions that the fishing was the best before the southwest coast of Iceland ("So düncket my syn vor Süden und Westen // Sy de visscherye am allerbesten"): Seelmann, "Gories Peerse", 118. Note that this verse does not permit the conclusion of Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 60, that Hamburg merchants were fishing themselves.

against this practice in the 1540s, it probably continued for much of the sixteenth century.[65]

There are no sources mentioning the supply of fishing boats to the local population in the Faroes and Shetland, but the presence of German merchants must have had a profound influence on the development of fisheries on these islands as well. With regard to the former, which lacked the natural resources to operate an export-driven fishing fleet, it is not inconceivable that the German traders supported the development of fisheries in some way, as they are not known to have fished themselves. Significantly, Faroese fish exports declined in the 1620s, by which time the Germans had been absent for some decades, being supplanted by knitwear as the main export commodity, while other foreign fishermen remained active in the waters around the islands.[66]

In Shetland, the commercialisation of export fisheries took place during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Bremen and Hamburg merchants were active there. Prior to this time most fish was probably intended for domestic consumption, with the surplus exported to Bergen. Long-line cod fishing was introduced in the 1570s, probably by English or Dutch fishermen, and German merchants brought fishing gear among other commodities. It is not entirely clear whether the Germans also fished themselves.[67] In contrast to the decline of the fisheries in the Faroes, however, the Scottish landowners in Shetland were instrumental in developing the commercial offshore fisheries, which continued after the German trade declined in the early eighteenth century.[68]

Remarkably, in Orkney we can see a development in the opposite direction: archaeo(zoo-)logical evidence here suggests that there existed export-oriented fisheries on the islands in the High Middle Ages, which declined during the

65 See Sections 3.5.2 and 4.3.1.

66 Jóan Pauli Joensen, "Fishing in the 'Traditional' Society of the Faroe Islands", in *A History of the North Atlantic Fisheries: From Early Times to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, ed. David J. Starkey, Jón Þ. Þór, and Ingo Heidbrink, vol. 1, Deutsche Maritime Studien 6 (Bremen, 2009), 314, 316–317.

67 For the seventeenth century, at least, this is suggested in a petition by William, Earl of Morton, to the Scottish Privy Council on 4 March 1662, where he mentions the "Lubicers, Hambergers and other strangers who arryved there yearlie to fish upon the coasts of the said island": *RPC* III, 1, p.182; Kathrin Zickermann, *Across the German Sea: Early Modern Scottish Connections with the Wider Elbe-Weser Region* (Leiden, 2013), 84; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 21.

68 Alistair Goodlad, "Five Centuries of Shetland Fisheries", in *Shetland and the Outside World 1469–1969*, ed. Donald J. Withrington, Aberdeen University Studies Series 157 (Oxford, 1983), 108–110; Alistair Goodlad, *Shetland Fishing Saga*, 1971, 76.

thirteenth century to the level of subsistence fisheries. The reasons for this are not well understood, but it has been suggested that this change was related to the development of export fisheries in Norway and Iceland combined with a political crisis on the islands, such that Orkney was unable to capitalise on the growing demand for stockfish in England and continental Europe and became more dependent economically on Scotland instead.[69] The lack of export fisheries might be the reason why there seems to have been hardly any German commercial interest in Orkney, although further research is needed here.

2.1.3 Salted fish

Connected to the development of the Shetland fisheries was the growing importance of whitefish dried with the help of salt. Whereas freeze-dried stockfish can only be produced in areas with long and cold enough winters to prevent the fish from spoiling before they are thoroughly dry, the addition of salt makes it possible to dry fish under less-favourable natural conditions or in summer. The English fishermen who came to Iceland in summer from the early fifteenth century onwards therefore salted their fish,[70] as they would also do with the cod caught on the banks of Newfoundland after their discovery in 1497.[71]

However, salt was not available everywhere, so that it had to be imported to the North Atlantic first, which made the procedure quite expensive. Moreover, salt for curing fish needed to be of a specifically pure quality, e.g. that produced by the Lüneburg saltworks, which was almost free from bitter substances.[72] Over

69 James H. Barret, "Being an Islander", in *Being an Islander. Production and Identity at Quoygrew, Orkney, AD 900–1600*, ed. James H. Barret (Oxford, 2012), 282–288.

70 Evan Jones, "England's Icelandic Fishery in the Early Modern Period", in *England's Sea Fisheries. The Commercial Sea Fisheries of England and Wales since 1300*, ed. David J. Starkey, Chris Reid, and Neil Ashcroft (London, 2000), 109; Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 208; Mark Gardiner, "The Character of Commercial Fishing in Icelandic Waters in the Fifteenth Century", in *Cod and Herring. The Archaeology of Medieval Sea Fishing*, ed. James H. Barret and David C. Orton (Oxford, 2016), 82.

71 Todd Gray and David J. Starkey, "The Distant-Water Fisheries of South West England in the Early Modern Period", in *England's Sea Fisheries. The Commercial Sea Fisheries of England and Wales since 1300*, ed. David J. Starkey, Chris Reid, and Neil Ashcroft (London, 2000), 100–104.

72 Volker Henn, "Der hansische Handel mit Nahrungsmitteln", in *Nahrung und Tischkultur im Hanseraum*, ed. Günter Wiegelmann and Ruth-E. Mohrmann (Münster, New York, 1996), 27. On the Lüneburg saltworks, see Harald Witthöft, *Die Lüneburger Saline: Salz in Nordeuropa und der Hanse vom 12.–19. Jahrhundert. eine Wirtschafts- und Kulturgeschichte langer Dauer* (Rahden, 2010), 328–333; Harald Witthöft, "Struktur und Kapazität der Lüneburger Saline seit dem 12. Jahrhundert", *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 63, no. 1 (1976): 1–117.

time, though, the supply of salt rose, among others because of the growth of the trade in boy salt from France. This was less pure, so that more was needed, but the disadvantage was offset by boy salt being considerably cheaper. Consequently the salting of North Atlantic fish became ever more commercially viable.[73]

The origin of the salt used in the North Atlantic fisheries is almost never mentioned, however. Klaus Friedland assumes on the basis of a 1671 note about the Bremen trade interests in Shetland, that Scottish salt was used by Bremen merchants to cure the fish caught in Shetland.[74] However, the document makes a distinction between Scottish salt imported to Bremen and salt exported to Shetland.[75] Although Scottish salt indeed comprised the largest part of all salt imports to Bremen in the seventeenth century, it was not pure enough to be used for curing the Shetland fish, for which it was needed to import salt from Germany. The Bremen Shetland merchants are known to have bought salt in Bremen in 1560 and 1575.[76] It is likely that this was boy salt from southwestern Europe. The only mention of the origin of salt used for curing fish in the North Atlantic is in 1661, when it is recorded that Hamburg merchants imported salt from Spain and Portugal to Shetland.[77] The importance of Iberian salt for the Shetland fisheries in the seventeenth century is also suggested by the fact that of the 21 known Hamburg merchants active in Shetland in 1644–1646, three were also active in other regions, namely the Iberian peninsula.[78] This might have had to do with the high demand for salted whitefish in Spain and Portugal, where it, known as *bacalhau* (derived from the German/Dutch *kabeljau(w)*, 'cod'), is still an important part of the culinary culture.

In Iceland, salted fish seems to have had little commercial interest for the German merchants, who did not fish themselves. Usually they bought the stockfish that was produced in winter. However, salted fish was not unknown in Iceland and its importance might have increased during the sixteenth century. A

73 Henn, "Handel mit Nahrungsmitteln", 27–28; Lampen, *Fischerei und Fischhandel*, 177; Schwebel, *Salz*, 12–19.

74 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 76.

75 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: "Memoriall", 1671 (16711100BRE00).

76 See Karl Heinz Schwebel, *Salz im alten Bremen*, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Staatsarchiv der Freien Hansestadt Bremen 56 (Bremen, 1988), 21–22, 36; Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 104; Philipp Robinson Rössner, *Scottish Trade with German Ports: 1700–1770 : A Sketch of the North Sea Trades and the Atlantic Economy on Ground Level*, Studien zur Gewerbe- und Handelsgeschichte der vorindustriellen Zeit 28 (Stuttgart, 2008), 125.

77 London, The National Archives, SP 82/10/79, f. 79, after catalogue description, accessed 8 June 2019, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7776908.

78 Martin Reißmann, *Die hamburgische Kaufmannschaft des 17. Jahrhunderts in sozialgeschichtlicher Sicht*, Beiträge zur Geschichte Hamburgs 4 (Hamburg, 1976), 71–72.

1549 list of commodities confiscated from Hamburg merchants by the bailiff in Iceland mentions 500 salted fish and 80 salted ling taken from Iven Jenidmen on Dirick Pineman's ship.[79] The Oldenburg account book of 1585 does list some instances of *bloete fisch* (from Icelandic *blaut* = 'wet', i.e. fresh fish, as opposed to *droege fisch* = 'dry fish', i.e. stockfish) having been received from Icelanders. Unless these were directly consumed by the Oldenburg men, they must have salted them to take them back to Germany. Salt was also imported by them. The amounts of fresh fish (3 *wett* 6.5 *fordung*) are only a fraction of the amounts of stockfish (496 *wett* 5 *fordung*) in the account book, however (see Table 2.1).[80] Similarly, a witness account from 1602 mentions the hardship faced by fishermen in Básendar, who had to travel to the Danish merchants in Keflavík in summer; the latter did not want to buy their fish because they were already one or two days old by the time the fishermen arrived there. This suggests as well that fish were also caught in Iceland during summer and sold fresh to foreign traders, who must have salted them afterwards.[81]

By contrast, in Shetland salted fish appears to have gradually replaced the stockfish produced there. Possibly the quality of the salted fish was better than the stockfish, which was not highly esteemed. By the seventeenth century the salting of fish seems to have become the standard practice in Shetland. This is suggested by the frequent Bremen complaints against the customs on imported salt, which was unfair in their eyes, as they only used the salt to cure fish and did not sell it.[82] Indeed, the prohibition against importing foreign salt in foreign ships to Great Britain in 1707 was one of the major reasons for the disappearance of the German trade in Shetland.[83] German merchants there thus probably bought fresh fish from the fishermen in summer, who put their catch

79 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2 (15490000HAM01): "Vc soltefisch unnd LXXX solten langen". Dirick Pineman probably sailed to Keflavík.

80 Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 105.

81 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): 30 August 1602 (16020830HAM00). This situation might have been exceptional, though: the winter of 1601/2 is known to have been exceptionally harsh and the sea ice might have prevented fishing in winter. See Section 4.1.2.

82 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 1671 and 1679 complaints against rises in customs (16711100BRE00, 16791216BRE00). By comparison, the records concerning Hamburg merchant Hans Sandemann from 1644 to 1646 show salted fish as being just a fraction of the Shetlandic fish he imported. However, the term is here only used for fish transported in barrels, and it is therefore not clear whether the loose dried fish that are also included in his imports were salted or not: Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 72.

83 Rössner, *Scottish Trade*, 120.

once a week or more often at the door of the merchant's booths.[84] The German merchants must have salted and cured at least a portion of the fish themselves. Regularly, they were accorded the right to use the stony beaches near their booths (the so-called *ayres*) for drying the fish.[85]

According to Jóan Pauli Joensen, the method of drying fish with salt was not introduced in the Faroes until the nineteenth century.[86] However, a 1584 note in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne that Joachim Thim donated twenty salted fish from his ship from the Faroes suggests otherwise.[87] The Hamburg merchants in the Faroes at that time may have engaged in a similar salted fish trade as in Shetland.

2.1.4 Other fishes and fish oil

Salting as a preservation method was not only suitable for cod-like fishes, from which stockfish traditionally was made, but for other fish species exported from Shetland as well. In 1626, a certain William Cogill was accused of stealing a great number of fish from *skeos* (huts used for storing food and curing fish), among others skates (rays), and sold thereof three lings, three "saith" (pollock, *Pollachius virens*) and nine dogfish (small sharks, possibly the spiny dogfish, *Squalus acanthias*) to a merchant from Bremen.[88] Herring was a significant trade good for the Germans in Shetland, although the offshore herring fisheries were dominated by the Dutch, who also exported the fish to Bremen and Hamburg.[89] In Iceland, we find the occasional mention of salmon (Figure 2.4), for example in relation to the Oldenburg merchants in Nesvogur,[90] and in 1592

84 As described by John Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland, Pightland Firth and Caithness* (Edinburgh, 1701), 198–199. See Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 17; Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 68. There seems to have been some kind of system for marking fish so that it could be traced to a certain fisherman, which is attested by other sources as well; see Donaldson, 50.

85 Goodlad, *Shetland Fishing Saga*, 71; Entholt and Beutin, *Bremen und Nordeuropa*, 16. See Section 5.4.1.

86 Joensen, "Fishing in the Faroes", 315–316.

87 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 302r.

88 *CBS 1615–1629*, p. 152. See also Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 50–52.

89 Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 95–96; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 19; Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 72.

90 NLO Best. 20, -25, no. 6: complaint of Harmen Kloppenborg about Bremen interference in Iceland, 3 September 1597 (15970903OLD00); Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 178.

Figure 2.4: Salmon fishing, from Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555).

Hamburg merchant Peter Sivers stated that he had regularly bought salmon in Hrútafjörður.[91] Halibut (*Hippoglossus hippoglossus*, as *raff*, tail fins, and *rekeling*, halibut strips) was traded in the North Atlantic, including Iceland, as well. The ship of Johannes Roremberg that was robbed by the English in 1475 on the way from Iceland to Bergen had among other items 450 *rekeling* and 60 *raff* on board.[92] Finally, a curiosity is the catch of a huge *benhakell* (Icelandic: *beinhákarl*, the basking shark, *Cetorhinus maximus*) in the harbour of Ríf in 1599, for which the crew of a Hamburg ship spent two Reichsthaler to the confraternity of St Anne.[93]

An important byproduct of the cod fisheries was train or fish oil (*tran*), which was boiled from cod livers and exported in large quantities to Germany. Train oil could be made from whales, seals, or Greenland sharks (Icelandic *hákarl*) as well, but the type is almost never specified in the written sources. There are a few

91 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): request of Peter Sivers for renewal of his licence, 7 March 1592 (15920307HAM00).

92 *DI* 6:66; *DN* 3:914: "quadringentos quinquaginta rækklingh, [. . .] sexaginta raffua" (14760307BER00). *Raff* and *rekeling* are also listed among imports to Bremen in the 1532, 1538, and 1630 accise registers, but it is not indicated from where these were imported. See Hofmeister, "Bremer Kornakzise", 66; Witzendorff, "Bremens Handel", 168.

93 "Noch hefft dat schepeßfolck gegeven 2 rikes daler, van wegen eines groten fisches, mit namen benhakell, so se darsulvest in der have de vorgangene reyse gefangen, is 16 elen lanck gewesenn, twischen dem koppe und sterte etc". SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 420r.

references to whale or seal oil,[94] but it is likely that the bulk of the *tran* was made from cod livers, given the large quantities of cod caught for the commercialised stockfish production. Train oil was used for a variety of purposes. According to Dithmar Blefken, Icelandic fish oil was especially sought after by German tanners and shoemakers.[95] As it was also used in the refining of sulphur, the Danish king prohibited the trade in train oil in 1562 after prohibiting the trade in sulphur the year before.[96] Special permission was needed to trade in train oil, but the ban does not seem to have been strictly enforced: German merchants continued to export train oil until the end of the sixteenth century.[97]

2.2 Sulphur

The reason for the 1562 limitations on the export of train oil from Iceland was the sulphur trade, of which the Danish king was attempting to take control. Due to its volcanic geology, Iceland has especially rich deposits of elemental sulphur, which were exploited for export from the thirteenth century onwards. The main production areas were the districts around Lake Mývatn in the north and to a considerably lesser extent Krýsuvík in the southwest (Figure 6.1). Sulphur was used for a variety of purposes, including the treatment of various diseases, the production of pigments, and as a preservative and disinfectant, most notably in wine making.[98] However, sulphur being an essential component in gunpowder

94 The 1570 account of Eggert Hannesson (*DI* 15:330, p. 511) mentions that he sold Hamburg merchant Arndt Hesterberch four barrels of whale oil (*huallyse*), whereas in the other entries in the account the generic Icelandic term for train oil, *lysi*, is used. Similarly, the ship of Hamburg merchant Paul Lindeman, returning from Iceland in 1588, was robbed of eight barrels of whale blubber, among other items (NRS, SP1/1, nos. 150A and 150B). See also *DI* 11:341. The only reference to seal fat is from 1476, when Johannes Roremberg, returning from Iceland, was robbed of "quatuor tonnas focinæ pinguedinis in unguentum resolutæ, quæ penes nos vulgariter lyse dicitur" ('four barrels of seal fat dissolved in a solution, which is commonly called *lyse* among us'), among other items (*DN* 3:914; *DI* 6:66).

95 Blefken, *Island*, 40–41. "Islandici habent oleum ex piscium visceribus liquefactum nostris alutariis ac sutoribus notum".

96 Natascha Mehler, "The Sulphur Trade of Iceland from the Viking Age to the End of the Hanseatic Period", in *Nordic Middle Ages – Artefacts, Landscapes and Society. Essays in Honor of Ingvild Øye on Her 70th Birthday*, University of Bergen Archaeological Series 8 (Bergen, 2015), 197.

97 Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 181.

98 For the Icelandic production of and trade in sulphur, see Mehler, "Sulphur Trade".

was what most probably caused King Frederick II to close the Icelandic sulphur trade to foreign merchants in 1561.[99]

Before 1561, Norwegian, English and German merchants are known to have traded sulphur from Iceland, first through Bergen and later directly. Hamburg and Lübeck merchants in particular were active in the northern harbours of Eyjafjörður (Akureyri) and Húsavík, where they sailed with two or three ships yearly.[100] They must have made considerable profits with sulphur and tried to keep sailing there in vain. The king initially granted the exclusive privilege of trading in sulphur to the influential Loitz family from Stettin, and later to various Danish merchants, and he set up a sulphur refinery and powder mill in Copenhagen to monopolise the sulphur trade.[101] Once the royal monopoly was established, however, the Icelandic sulphur export seems to have gone into decline. In 1564, Stefan Loitz complained that the price of sulphur on the European market had dropped due to the opening of sulphur mines in Goslar and Cracow, and asked for a reduction in the payments to the king for the Icelandic sulphur monopoly.[102] Moreover, it seems that the Icelandic sulphur mines became overexploited towards the end of the century, as the amount of exported sulphur decreased.[103]

2.3 Butter

On the *Carta Marina*, barrels of butter are shown near the monastery of Helgafell in Iceland, referencing butter production at the Icelandic monasteries and dioceses (Figure 1.3: H). Butter was a common form of payment for taxes to the bishoprics, where large quantities of butter were amassed.[104] The importance of butter as a trading commodity is however hard to pin down, as it was both exported and imported. According to Olaus Magnus, salted butter was produced in

99 *DI* 13:426, 427 (15610119EMB00, 15610119EMB01). See Section 3.5.3.

100 See Sections 6.5.3 and 6.5.4.

101 See Section 3.5.5.

102 RAK D11, Pakke 30 (Suppl. II, 35): letters of Stefan Loitz to Frederick II, 1564 (15640811KOB00; 15641203STE00).

103 Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 197; Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 179–180.

104 Vilborg Auður Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Die Einführung der Reformation in Island 1537–1565. Die Revolution von oben*, Europäische Hochschulschriften: Reihe 3, Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften 708 (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), 75.

Figure 2.5: A clump of medieval butter, excavated near Burravoe in Yell, Shetland, with remnants of its container (C-14 dated *c*. 1000). Shetland Museum and Archives, inv. no. ARC 66121, photograph courtesy of Ian Tait.

Iceland "partly for consumption at home, but more particularly for barter with merchants".[105] The salt that preserved this exported butter had probably first been brought by German merchants to Iceland, as they had done in the salted fish trade.[106] On the other hand, a document from 1551 lists butter among the commodities *imported* by Hamburg merchants to Iceland.[107] Late sixteenth-century accounts of the governors of the Faroes show that butter was exported from there as well.[108]

Where in Iceland and the Faroes butter was probably of minor importance as a trading commodity, in Shetland butter and oil enjoyed a significance as an export commodity that only fish could rival. Taxes and rents were paid to landowners in butter there as well, who subsequently traded it with the German

105 Magnus, *Historia* 21:4 (vol. 3, p. 1085).
106 Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 178–179.
107 *DI* 12:106.
108 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 106–107.

merchants. It is unclear what the quality of this butter was. According to Gordon Donaldson, the Shetlanders reserved the lowest quality of butter for paying taxes, which "was fit only for greasing wagon-wheels".[109] Either this is exaggerated, or there was quite a market for wagon-wheel grease on the continent. German merchants must have realised some level of profits by exporting cheap butter to the European market, because the court books of Shetland in the early seventeenth century list many debts owed by and to German merchants that often concern the trade in butter.[110] However, whereas the German merchants had a near monopoly on the Shetland fish trade, much of the Shetland butter was also exported to Scotland, which makes it difficult to assess its importance.[111]

2.4 Falcons

A specific luxury export product from Iceland was the gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), the largest and strongest falcon species, which only lives in the Arctic regions.[112] Moreover, there exists a white variety, which is most frequent in the high Arctic such as Greenland and appears in Iceland only in winter, especially in years with much drift ice. According to Olaus Magnus, this bird was known for its endurance, which he attributed to the cold climate in which it lived.[113] The size, strength, and rarity of the bird, especially the white variety, made it one of the most desired and valuable birds of prey in falconry, with their use being reserved for members of the highest nobility in Europe and the Middle East. Gyrfalcons are mentioned as the best falcons in the famous falconry treatise *De arte venandi cum avibus* of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250), and the trade in them was probably already taking place in the eleventh century.[114] In the fourteenth century Lübeck merchants became involved in the gyrfalcon trade, probably acquiring them in

109 Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 28.

110 *CBS 1602–1604*, pp. 15, 46; *CBS 1615–1629*, p. 140; Donaldson, 60. Cf. E. S. Reid Tait, *Some Notes on the Shetland Hanseatic Trade* (Lerwick, 1955), 8–9. See also Section 4.2.3.

111 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 20.

112 On the Icelandic gyrfalcon trade, see Natascha Mehler, Hans Christian Küchelmann, and Bart Holterman, "The Export of Gyrfalcons from Iceland during the 16th Century: A Boundless Business in a Proto-Globalized World", in *Raptor and Human – Falconry and Bird Symbolism throughout the Millennia on a Global Scale*, ed. O. Grimm and U. Schmölke, vol. 3 (Neumünster, 2018), 995–1020.

113 Magnus, *Historia* 19:23 (vol. 3, p. 973).

114 Gisela Hofmann, "Falkenjagd und Falkenhandel in den nordischen Ländern während des Mittelalters", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 88 (1957): 139–140, 149.

Bergen.[115] English merchants traded gyrfalcons from Iceland as well: John Fowler, for example, imported a gyrfalcon to Lynn in 1518.[116]

Not surprisingly, King Frederick II of Denmark also tried to take control of the falcon trade. In a letter from 1563, Governor Paul Stigsen of Iceland informed the Danish king of the illegal presence of falcon trappers in the country, which indicates that a special licence was needed to catch Icelandic falcons by this time.[117] One of these licences was given to English falcon trapper Henrick Gettle in 1580.[118] Frequent mentions of falcon catchers sailing on Hamburg ships in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne indicate that Hamburg merchants were active in the falcon trade as well, sometimes on behalf of the Danish authorities.[119]

More-detailed information about the operation of the Icelandic gyrfalcon trade is provided by the account books (1582–1594) of Hamburg merchant Matthias Hoep, who among other goods traded in birds of prey.[120] His accounts contain two contracts with men from Holstein, who are sent to Iceland to catch falcons: one with Augustin and Marcus Mumme (1584), and the other with Carsten and Heyn Gotken from Elmshorn (1583). The contracts specify the prices as well: a pair of falcons is worth 11.5 daler, female falcons are double the value of male falcons, light falcons are worth 20 daler, and bonuses are paid for the all-white variety.[121] Most of these falcons were sold on to the English Merchant Adventurers in Hamburg, who delivered them to the English court.[122]

115 Klaus Friedland, "The Hanseatic League and Hanse Towns in the Early Penetration of the North", *ARCTIC* 37, no. 4 (1984): 540–541.

116 *DI* 16:45; Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 181.

117 *DI* 14:112.

118 *KB* 1580–1583, p. 165.

119 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 146v (1556): *Jordan de falckenfenger*, f. 277v (1582): *Willen valckenfenger*, *Austin falckenfenger*, f. 329v (1587): *Wilm de falckenfenger*, f. 349r (1589): *Jacob de falkenfenger* and an anonymous falcon catcher, ff. 359r, 360v (1590): *Hinrich de falckenfenger*, *Tonnies de falckenfenger*. Both falcon catchers mentioned in 1589 must have been sent on behalf of the Danish king by Gert Rantzau, as evidenced by a letter of 6 April that year: *KB* 1588–1592, p. 162. Mehler, Küchelmann, and Holterman, "Falcon Trade", 1001–1002.

120 See Richard Ehrenberg, "Zur Geschichte der Hamburger Handlung im 16. Jahrhundert", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 8 (1889): 139–182; Kurt F. C. Piper, "Der Greifvogelhandel des Hamburger Kaufmanns Matthias Hoep (1582–1594)", *Greifvögel und Falknerei. Jahrbuch des Deutschen Falkenordens*, 2003, 205–12.

121 Commerzbibliothek S/456, vol. B, f. 35v; vol. E, p. 356.

122 Mehler, Küchelmann, and Holterman, "Falcon Trade", 1003–1008. The importance of the English market for the Hamburg trade in Icelandic gyrfalcons is also attested by the import of many Icelandic falcons by Hamburg merchant Paul Snepel to London in the years around

Figure 2.6: Taking care of a gyrfalcon, from Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555).

It is likely that these falcon catchers both caught falcons themselves *and* bought them from local catchers. This goes specifically for the white falcons, which are present in Iceland in winter, when the Germans were not supposed to be there. The falcon catchers employed by Hoep must have depended on a good network in Iceland built up over many years, as their names show up for decades as passengers on Hamburg ships in the confraternity's donation registers.[123]

2.5 Other North Atlantic commodities

Of lesser importance was the export of some other North Atlantic produce, most notable *wadmal* (Icelandic *vaðmál*) or homespun. This was a densely woven woollen fabric that had been the primary North Atlantic export product in the High Middle Ages. It was widely accepted as a currency before the trade in it was eclipsed by the commercialisation of the stockfish production in Iceland during the fourteenth century.[124] However, it remained in some demand among

1550: Klaus Friedland, "Hamburger Englandfahrer 1512–1557", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 46 (1960): 27, Beilage II.

123 Mehler, Küchelmann, and Holterman, "Falcon Trade", 1001–1002.

124 On *wadmal* in general, see Helgi Þorláksson, "Vaðmál og verðlag: vaðmál í utanlandsviðskiptum og búskap Íslendinga á 13. og 14. öld" (1991).

German merchants: it is mentioned as a form of payment in both in the debt register of Clawes Monnickhusen from Bremen and the Oldenburg account book.[125] As *wadmal* occupied a similar position in the Faroes and Shetland, it is likely that German merchants exported it from there as well. In Shetland, rents to landowners were still partly paid in *wadmal* until 1628 and German merchants also traded in it, although the extent is unknown.[126] Coarse wool fabrics from the North Atlantic seem to have been used for packaging bales of stockfish as well, which is supported by archaeological finds of fragments of these fabrics from ports along the North and Baltic Sea coasts, among others Bergen and Hamburg.[127]

Meat was also traded to some extent. After the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in 1601, the export of meat became a significant element of the Icelandic economy, with some harbours, indicated as "butcher harbours", specialising in this.[128] Although German merchants were predominantly interested in fish products and sulphur, they are also known to have accepted meat as payment.[129] For example, the Oldenburg account book lists payments in sheep, hares, and one seven-year ox.[130] The ship of Hamburg merchant Paul Lindeman, returning from trading with Iceland, was robbed by Orkney pirates in 1588, of mutton, beef, and four Icelandic sheep among other things.[131] In Shetland, meat was similarly an export commodity of some importance. The Bremen ship carpenter Gerdt Breker stated in a 1558 court case that he had travelled from the ship to the shore twice in ten or twelve days with skipper Cordt Hemeling, whose death he was accused of having caused,[132] to fetch sheep.[133] However, it is also possible that this meat was intended for consumption by the crew. A clearer

125 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 34; Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 105.
126 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 20.
127 Susanne Möller-Wiering, *Segeltuch und Emballage. Textilien im mittelalterlichen Warentransport auf Nord- und Ostsee*, Internationale Archäologie 70 (Rahden, 2002), 161–169; "Die Textilfunde von der Hamburger Reichenstraßeninsel", *Hammaburg* NF 13 (2002): 216–218.
128 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 278; Gisli Gunnarsson, *Monopoly Trade and Economic Stagnation. Studies in the Foreign Trade of Iceland 1602–1787* (Lund, 1983), 75. See also Section 5.1.
129 Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 182; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 86.
130 SAO 262–1, no. 3, pp. 11, 18, 38, 40, 45, 47 (15850000OLD00); Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 105.
131 NRS, SP1/1, nos. 150A and 150B.
132 See also Sections 4.1.4 and 5.2.
133 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: defense of Gerdt Breker, 7 February 1558 (15580207BRE00).

expression of German interest in Shetland meat is a contract from 1628, in which Hamburg merchant Franz Brandt extended credit to minister Gilbert Mowat in Northmavine, which he had to repay in eight years in butter, ling, or oxen.[134]

Other commodities mentioned irregularly are down (most probably from eider), wool, and lamb skins (the latter also called *schmaschen*).[135] Down is mentioned in 1475 for Iceland,[136] in 1534 for the Faroes and Shetland,[137] and in 1590 in the account books of Matthias Hoep, who also imported Icelandic wool.[138] Icelandic wool and sheep skins are regularly mentioned in the cargoes of ships sailing to Hamburg in the seventeenth century, but for the previous century there is hardly any evidence.[139] A 1711 description of Shetland mentions that the locals regularly sold seal and otter skins to the Germans as well.[140]

In 1563, King Frederick II prohibited the export of horses, fox and bear skins, and walrus and whale teeth to foreigners before they had been offered to the Danish authorities.[141] These must have been luxury items, which we only find in single instances. In 1475, the ship of Johannes Roremberg was robbed on the way from Iceland to Bergen of a hundred fox skins, among other items, by the English.[142] Dithmar Blefken tells the story of merchant Conradt Bloem, who was given a tusk of a narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*), a toothed whale species that lives in the Arctic waters around Greenland, by Icelandic fishermen who had found it in drift ice in the winter of 1561. Bloem subsequently sold it for some thousand florins in Antwerp.[143] These narwhal tusks were widely

134 *SD 1612–1637*, no. 1234.

135 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 83–84; Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 182.

136 The English robbed Johannes Roremberg of "tres saccos refertos plumis", among other items: *DI* 6:66; *DN* 3:914 (14760307BER00).

137 Complaint of the Bergen Kontor from 1534 against the trade of Hamburg, Bremen, and Amsterdam in the Faroes and Shetland, from where they export "vedderen", among other products: Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 83 n. 3. See also Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 161; A. C. Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu í 16. öld*, vol. 1 (Tórshavn, 1908), no. 15; *Samlinger Til Det Norske Folks Sprog Og Historie*, vol. 2 (Christiania, 1833), 365–375.

138 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 83.

139 Baasch, 84.

140 Reid Tait, *Shetland Hanseatic Trade*, 4.

141 Magnús Ketilsson, *Kongelige Allernaadigste Forordninger og aabne Breve, som til Island ere udgivne af de Høist-priselige Konger af den Oldenborgiske Stamme*, vol. 2 (Rappsøe, 1776), 18–20; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 42.

142 *DI* 6:66; *DN* 3:914 (14760307BER00).

143 Blefken, *Island*, 64–67.

believed to be the horns of unicorns in medieval continental Europe and worth a fortune due to their attributed magical qualities. The story is confirmed by letters from Stefan Loitz to the Danish king in the 1560s, which also mention a horn of a fish brought from Iceland by Cordt Blome.[144] Blefken stated that the incident was the reason that the Danish king prohibited the winter stay for foreign merchants, which is nonsense,[145] but it might have been the reason for the 1563 trade limitation on rare items.

A final curiosity is an entry in the donation register of the Hamburg confraternity from 1637, when Asmus Schulte donated money to the confraternity because of a chess game he acquired in Iceland.[146]

2.6 Commodities brought from Germany to the North Atlantic

The commodities imported to the North Atlantic islands by the German merchants were much more varied than the exports. Dithmar Blefken wrote that the German merchants in Hafnarfjörður sold "shoes, clothing, mirrors, knives, and other worthless goods" to the Icelanders.[147] The adjective "worthless" was both pejorative and inaccurate, as foreign merchants brought all kinds of commodities which were not available on the islands due to a lack of natural resources, including luxury items such as high-quality fabrics from Flanders and England. Helgi Þorláksson has noted that beginning around 1200, with the growth of international trade, the Icelandic elite came to prefer foreign luxury products over domestically produced goods.[148] Moreover, both written sources and physical objects testify to the trade in church organs, altarpieces, and other liturgical art works and books with the insular churches.[149]

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144 RAK D11, Pakke 30 (Suppl. II, 35): letter of Stefan Loitz to Frederick II, 14 January 1565 (15650114REN00). See also Michael Gottlieb Stelzner, *Versuch Einer Zuverläßigen Nachricht von Dem Kirchlichen Und Politischen Zustande Der Stadt Hamburg: In Den Mittleren Zeiten; Nemlich von Käyser Friedrichs Des III. Biß Auf Die Zeiten Käyser Ferdinand Des II.*, vol. 2, (1731), 319, who named the merchant Clas Blomen, and wrote that he sold it in Burgundy for 500 Reichstaler.

145 The winter stay had been prohibited since the 1480s. See Sections 3.5.1 and 4.3.2.

146 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 2 (16290000HAM00), p. 18; Kurt Friedrich Christian Piper, "Ein Archivfund zur Geschichte des Schachspiels in Island", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 5.1 (1999): 46.

147 "calceos scilicet, vestes, specula, cultellos et id genus mercium nullius fere pretii." Blefken, *Island*, 40–41.

148 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 181.

149 See Section 4.5.

The account books of Bremen merchant Clawes Monnickhusen and the Oldenburg merchants in Kumbaravogur give a good overview of the variety of commodities brought to the North Atlantic by the German merchants (see Table 2.1). Of these, the most important categories are foodstuffs, beverages, and fabrics. Grain-based food and drinks such as flour, malt, and beer were imported in large quantities, as well as wine[150] (for religious services as well), brandy, mead, honey, and salt in smaller amounts. Fabrics mainly consisted of continental luxury woollen fabrics and linen in different qualities.[151] Merchants brought in manufactured goods as well, ranging from clothing such as shoes, hats, trousers, and belts to knives, swords and daggers, ropes and hooks (used for fishing), horseshoes, combs, empty barrels, wooden chests, and pots and pans, i.e. Blefken's "worthless goods". Some of these items were produced in the northern German towns in which the merchants were based, others acquired on the market. The importance of the Icelandic trade for Hamburg's blacksmiths is for example emphasised in their 1560 guild regulations, which include a penalty for late deliveries of ordered products specifically to Iceland merchants.[152] The Oldenburg account books give us a good indication for the acquisition of merchandise as well: they contain expenses for brewing beer and dying fabrics in the town, whereas pre-dyed fabrics and manufactured items were acquired in Bremen.[153]

A last important category is raw materials and intermediate goods, such as tar, wax, and Swedish raw iron (*osemund*), of which the latter especially was sold in large quantities. The Oldenburg merchants acquired their iron in Lübeck.[154] Within this category are timber and other building materials, which were scarce on the islands due to the lack of trees. The lack of timber, mainly for the construction of boats, was a recurring theme especially in the Faroes, as complaints are

150 Magnus, *Historia* 13:19–21 (vol. 2, 635–637) also notes the import of Spanish, French, and especially Rhenish wines to Scandinavia in large quantities by German merchants.

151 On the Hanseatic trade in textiles, see Angela Ling Huang, *Die Textilien des Hanseraums: Produktion und Distribution einer spätmittelalterlichen Fernhandelsware* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2015).

152 Rüdiger, *Zunftrollen*, 254. The penalty was assessed for products ordered by "any Iceland trader, merchant, citizen and inhabitant of this good town" ("jenig Iszlannderfahrer, kopmann, bürger unnd inwaner düsser gudenn stadt"). Late deliveries to Iceland merchants might have been specifically problematic because of their long sailing times and limited trading season, see Section 4.1.2.

153 Kohl, "Oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 45.

154 Kohl, 45.

Table 2.1: Most important commodities traded in Kumbaravogur in Iceland in 1557/8 and 1585, based on the debt books of Bremen merchant Clawes Monnickhusen, 1557/8, and the Oldenburg merchants, 1585.

Imports	**Monnickhusen 1557/8**	**Oldenburg 1585**
Flour (barrel)	29	120
Beer (barrel)	10	31
Cloth (ell)	*c*. 44	321
Linen (ell)	*c*. 45	602
Iron (value in fish)[155]	5w	21w 7.5f
Timber (pieces of various kinds)	37	66.5
Shoes (pair)	4	49
Shirt (piece)	2	25
Hat (piece)	5	20
Belt (piece)	10	62
Kettle (piece)	7	12
Horseshoes (set)	5	26
Other retail items of various kinds[156]		
Exports		
Stockfish	149w 3f	496w 5f
Fresh fish	–	3w 6.5f
Salmon	–	13w 2.5f
Fish oil	3f, 1⅛ barrel	33.5w
Butter	–	8.5w
Wadmal	3 ells	12w 2f
Sheep	–	4
Oxen	–	1

Note: One *wett* (Icelandic *vætt;* w) was forty fish, divided into eight *fordung* (Icelandic *fjórðung*; f), which each weighed twenty *mark* or ten *pund*, i.e. one standard fish weighed *c*. two *pund*. The equivalence was one-half ell of *wadmal*, which was the Hamburg ell.[157]

recorded about the inadequate timber supply by the foreign merchants.[158] Bricks, which were not produced on the islands, were in some demand as well. In 1541, bishop Gizur of Skálholt in Iceland paid Hamburg merchant Hans van Lubbeke for lime and bricks to be used in the construction of two

155 Quantities of iron are never mentioned, only their value in fish.

156 See Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 34; Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 94.

157 Finnur Jónsson, "Islands mønt, maal og vægt", in *Maal og vægt*, Nordisk kultur 30 (Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, 1936), 159; Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 35; Björn Þorsteinsson, "Island", 192; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 64–65.

158 *KB* 1566–1570, pp. 316, 477–478. See also Section 3.6.

chimneys in the harbour of Eyrarbakki in 1541.[159] The import of bricks is also attested by the find of a round brick structure in the trading site of Gautavík in eastern Iceland.[160]

Although there is less data available for the Faroes and Shetland, the imported foreign products must have been largely the same due to the similar natural conditions. George Buchanan described in 1582 that the Shetlanders "dress in German fashion, but for their abilities not indecorously", indicating the high value put upon imports of continental fabrics and clothes.[161] Custom records for Shetland in the late seventeenth century show an almost identical range of products with the addition of tobacco, which shows the growing influence of colonial trade on European consumption patterns.[162] Finally, a peculiarity of the Shetland trade was the import of guns. In 1557, a merchant of Leith in Scotland bought "munitioun" and "thre peces of artalyeary callit doubile barsis with vj chalmeris pertenand therto" from Bremen merchant Henry (Henrick) Schroder in Shetland.[163] Moreover, guns are known to have been accepted as payment for customs fees by the officials in Shetland.[164]

2.7 Price developments

It is generally claimed that stockfish prices in Norway, in comparison to grain, were high in the years after the Black Death, as the demand exceeded the supply, gradually declining from the early fifteenth century onwards.[165] In Iceland, however, prices of the basic commodities were fixed by the Althing, and remained the

159 *DI* 10:393.

160 Natascha Mehler et al., "Gautavík – a Trading Site in Iceland Re-Examined", in *German Trade in the North Atlantic, c. 1400–1700. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Natascha Mehler, Mark Gardiner, and Endre Elvestad, AmS-Skrifter 27 (Stavanger, 2019): 230, 236–237; Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 392. See Section 6.6.3.

161 "Vestiuntur Germanico ritu, sed iuxta facultates non indecore". George Buchanan, *Rerum Scoticarum historia* (Edinburgh, 1582) 1:47; Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 103–104.

162 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 17–19.

163 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 111; Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 59.

164 *SD 1580–1611*, no. 327 (1601); Brian Smith, "Shetland and Her German Merchants, c. 1450–1710", in *German Trade in the North Atlantic, c. 1400–1700. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Natascha Mehler, Mark Gardiner, and Endre Elvestad, AmS-Skrifter 27 (Stavanger, 2019), 149.

165 Wubs-Mrozewicz, "Fish, Stock and Barrel", 203–204; Arnved Nedkvitne, "The Development of the Norwegian Long-Distance Stockfish Trade", in *Cod and Herring: The Archaeology and History of Medieval Sea Fishing*, ed. James Barret and David C. Orton (Oxford, 2016), 53.

same throughout much of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Table 2.2).[166] Upon the arrival of the German merchants in Iceland in spring, these prices were communicated to them by the local sheriff during the *kaupsetning*.[167] For the Icelanders, this guaranteed that they could afford basic foodstuffs, and for the Germans these fixed prices seem to have been no problem, as long as they could make good profits on the European continent.

However, in the course of the sixteenth century the situation changed. A trend of inflation during this period, which specifically made grain much more expensive (the "price revolution"), made it increasingly less profitable for German traders to stick to the fixed prices.[168] Around the middle of the century we can see the first effects in Iceland. In 1545, Icelanders started to complain that the Germans were using false measures and weights,[169] and in 1556 Frederick II admonished the German merchants to stop using them.[170] The Hamburg merchants replied that the prices of the commodities they brought to Iceland had risen so steeply that it was no longer profitable for them to trade in Iceland, and therefore they wanted permission to calculate prices for fish based on weight instead of per piece, because they had to accept small fish as payment as well as large ones.[171] This request was probably not granted, but as we can see from the account books of Monnickhusen and the Oldenburg merchants in Kumbaravogur, prices were raised soon after (Table 2.2).[172] In 1589, the price for a barrel of flour was set at 50 fish (where it had been 30 or 40 before); Icelanders stated that the price was sometimes as high as 60–80 fish.[173]

However, Icelandic stockfish producers seem to have been better off than their colleagues in Norway, where the drop in prices in the sixteenth century was much steeper. It has been suggested that the German merchants did not push for further reduction of the stockfish prices in Iceland because only for basic foodstuffs and cloth were maximum prices set; much of the profit must

166 Þorláksson, "Vaðmál og verðlag", 106–107.

167 See Section 4.1.3.

168 See Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 73–75; Ehrenberg, "Hamburger Handlung", 27; and Hitzbleck, "Bedeutung des Fisches", 140–158, for prices of Icelandic stockfish in Hamburg and on other European markets in the late sixteenth century, which shows that the rise in prices for fish lagged behind that for grain. Pétur Eiríksson, "Mikilvægi Íslandsverslunarinnar fyrir Hamborg á 15. og 16. öld" (master's thesis, Háskoli Íslands, 2014), 99–107.

169 *DI* 11: 367 (15450630TIN00); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 65; Þorsteinsson, "Island", 192.

170 *DI* 13:76 (15560210KOB00). This is in a letter to Lübeck; a similar letter must have been sent to Hamburg.

171 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 13 March 1556 (15560313HAM00).

172 Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 202–203.

173 Helgi Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, Saga Íslands, VI (Reykjavík, 2003), 146.

Table 2.2: Prices of imported commodities in Iceland (in fish).

Commodity	*c.* 1420, 1531, 1540, 1546	1558, 1585
Butter (barrel)	120	–
Cloth (*halfstycki*)	120	–
Wine (barrel)	100	160
Mead (barrel)	60	80
Flour (barrel)	30	40
Beer (barrel)	30	40
Malt (barrel)	20	–

Sources: *kaupsetning* for the years *c.* 1420 (*DI* 4:337), 1531 (*DI* 9:482), 1540 (DI 10:293), 1546 (DI 11:458); SAB 7,2051: debt register of Clawes Monnickhusen (15570000BRE00); SAO 262–1, no. 3: debt register of the Oldenburg merchants 1585 (15850000OLD00).

therefore have been made in the retail trade in raw materials, clothing and manufactured goods.[174] Moreover, with regard to Bergen it has been suggested that the Norwegians made up for the decrease in prices by exporting ever larger volumes of fish, although it is hard to verify these data.[175] However, a similar tendency in Iceland might explain the high numbers of German ships sailing to Iceland in the late sixteenth century, as we will see in the next chapter (Figure 3.4). For Shetland and the Faroes, the absence of data means we cannot say anything about these developments in the sixteenth century.

174 Þorsteinsson, "Island", 193.
175 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 572–575.

3 Political background: The Hanse, urban centres, and foreign authorities

The connections between the German cities on the North Sea and the North Atlantic islands date back to the ninth century, when the archdiocese of Bremen-Hamburg was made the centre of missionary actions for Scandinavia. With the gradual establishment of church and state structures in northern Europe, however, these connections were severed.[1] By the time merchants from these cities (re-)established direct connections with the North Atlantic centuries later, the circumstances had fundamentally changed.[2] How German merchants interacted with the North Atlantic islands was largely determined by two political realities: the position of the North Atlantic islands as *skattlands* (tributary lands) of Norway, and the position of the town of Bergen and the Hanseatic *Kontor* there in the western Scandinavian trade network.

3.1 *Skattlands* of the Norwegian king

The Viking settlers who migrated from Norway to the North Atlantic islands in the ninth and tenth centuries were practically independent at first, even though many had personal ties to the king of Norway and there was frequent contact between these lands. This changed in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the Norwegian king started to bring the Norse-settled lands across the North Sea and the North Atlantic under his control as *skattlands*, which had to pay tribute.[3] It is a bit uncertain at what time this exactly happened, as primary sources evidencing this development are scarce. The term *skattland* in Norwegian legal texts and the division between mainland Norway and its insular territories is first known from the late thirteenth century,[4] but there are hints that the system existed before that time. Based on the saga

1 Adolf E. Hofmeister, "Die Erzbischöfe von Hamburg-Bremen und das Christentum auf Island", in *Kirche – Kaufmann – Kabeljau: 1000 Jahre Bremer Islandfahrt*, ed. Adolf E. Hofmeister and Alfred Löhr, Kleine Schriften des Staatsarchivs Bremen 30 (Bremen, 2000), 11–22; Ulrich Weidinger, "Staatsmacht und Diplomatie im Dienst der Glaubensverkündung: Die Nordlandmission der Bremer Kirche im Früh- und Hochmittelalter", *Denkmalpflege in Bremen* 16 (2019): 25–48.

2 See Adolf E. Hofmeister, "Bremens Handelsbeziehungen zu Skandinavien im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit", *Denkmalpflege in Bremen* 16 (2019): 50–54.

3 Imsen, "Introduction" (2010), 20–22.

4 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, "The Norse Community", in *The Norwegian Domination and the Norse World c.1100–c.1400*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Trondheim, 2010), 62; Randi Bjørshol Wærdahl, *The*

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tradition, the Faroes are said to have become a fief of Norway around the middle of the eleventh century; according to Faroese historian Hans Jacob Debes, however, this was a thirteenth-century attempt to legitimise Norwegian rule on the islands, which was in reality not yet established in the eleventh century.[5] Shetland, which had been ruled by the earls of Orkney, was ceded to King Sverre in 1195 after Earl Harald Maddadson was accused of having supported a rebellion against him. However, in the chronicle *Historia Norwegie* from the 1160s or 1170s, Shetland is already mentioned as paying tribute to the Norwegian king, as are the Faroes.[6]

For Iceland, the situation is clearer. It managed to stay outside the direct control of Norway until the thirteenth century, when a long period of civil war, in which Icelandic vassals of the Norwegian king fought other chieftains on the island, eventually forced the entire island to submit to the Norwegian king. The resulting so-called *Gizurarsáttmáli* of 1262 and the following 'Old Covenant' (*Gamli sáttmáli*) of 1302 mark the beginning of Iceland as a *skattland* of the Norwegian king. From now on, Icelanders had to pay taxes to the king, who in return promised to secure the peace and provided Iceland with a law code.[7]

Another measure included in the Old Covenant was the agreement that every year the king had to provide six ships that would sail between Norway and Iceland. The exact meaning of this clause, which apparently refers to Icelandic foreign trade, has provoked much scholarly debate. The chief impediment to the resolution of this debate is the lack of information about the economic situation in the North Atlantic in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Furthermore, we have to take into account, as Patricia Boulhosa has pointed out, that the text of the Old Covenant is only extant in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts; this has given rise to the presumption that the clause about the six ships might be a later addition.[8] Scholars have turned to the Icelandic

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Incorporation and Integration of the King's Tributary Lands into the Norwegian Realm c. 1195–1397, The Northern World 53 (Leiden, 2011), 70.

5 Hans Jacob Debes, *Føroya søga. Skattland og len*, vol. 2 (Tórshavn, 1995), 34–35; Bjørshol Wærdahl, *Incorporation and Integration*, 58.

6 Sigurðsson, "Norse Community", 62–63; Imsen, "Introduction" (2010), 13–16; Imsen, "Royal Dominion", 70–73; Bjørshol Wærdahl, *Incorporation and Integration*, 31, 71–72.

7 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, "The Making of a 'Skattland': Iceland 1247–1450", in *Rex Insularum. The King of Norway and His 'Skattlands' as a Political System c. 1260–c. 1450*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Bergen, 2014), 181–187; Imsen, "Introduction" (2014), 37–38.

8 Patricia Pires Boulhosa, *Icelanders and the Kings of Norway: Mediaeval Sagas and Legal Texts* (Leiden, 2005); Helgi Þorláksson, "King and Commerce. The Foreign Trade of Iceland in Medieval Times and the Impact of Royal Authority", in *The Norwegian Domination and the Norse World c.1100–c.1400*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Trondheim, 2010), 150–153.

annals, but these are problematic sources because of their non-systematic and heavily anecdotal character. Boulhosa observes that as a result, any assessment based on them is necessarily tentative.[9]

Nevertheless, it is usually assumed that the thirteenth century saw a decline in the international trade with Iceland, with there being no Icelandic shipowners, possibly due to a lack of timber for the construction of ships. This might have forced the Icelanders into depending on Norway for their foreign imports, hence the clause in the Old Covenant. Archaeological evidence, however, may indicate that there was in fact no cessation in the international trade in the thirteenth century.[10]

Although Iceland in this time might be characterised as economically self-sufficient, this does not mean that there was no foreign interest in Iceland, as Helgi Þorláksson notes. There are frequent mentions of Norwegian merchants in Iceland even before the Old Covenant.[11] For both the Norwegian king and the Icelandic elites, the arrangement about frequent shipping must have been advantageous: for the former, who probably did not maintain his own ships for this purpose, these ships brought the taxes from Iceland. For the Icelandic upper class: the clergy and the chieftains, regular imports from abroad were vital to maintaining their lifestyle and church buildings, though they were at the same time concerned with limiting foreign influence on the island. Moreover, there was a foreign demand for *wadmal* from Iceland, which was also the currency in which the taxes were paid to Norway.[12] A similar situation might have been the case in the Faroes, where an arrangement was made in 1270 or 1271 to supply the archipelago from Norway with two ships annually.[13]

However, during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the political attention in the realm gradually shifted southwards. Norway transformed into a land-based kingdom with a political centre in the south, where most of the population lived and where major fortifications were built, from the sea-based power it had been in earlier times. Significant indications of this development are the defeat of Haakon IV's expedition against Scotland in 1263 and the loss of the Isle of Man and the Hebrides to Scotland in 1266, which was the symbolic end of Norwegian dominance on both sides of the North Sea. Moreover, the unification of the Scandinavian kingdoms in the Kalmar Union of 1397 shifted the centre of power even further southwards to Sweden, the Baltic region, and especially

9 Boulhosa, "Fish and Ships", 177–178.

10 Boulhosa, 184–190; Edvardsson, "Commercial and Subsistance Fishing".

11 Þorláksson, "King and Commerce", 150.

12 Þorláksson, 150; Bjørshol Wærdahl, *Incorporation and Integration*, 39–40.

13 Þorláksson, "King and Commerce", 152; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 161.

Denmark, where there was a strong influence of German princes. The North Atlantic islands were now on the periphery of the realm. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, North Atlantic islanders had to travel all the way to Copenhagen to see the king, who had all but lost sight of the islands.[14]

Emblematic of this change is the Icelandic aristocrats stating in 1419 at the Althing, Iceland's central political institution, that the agreement about the six ships had not been upheld for a long time, in response to King Eric's prohibition of the island's trade with foreigners.[15] Indeed, although there were still plenty of ships sailing between Norway and Iceland in the early fourteenth century, the connections were irregular, and the annals show that in many years not a single ship arrived from Norway.[16] The decline of regular shipping traffic between Norway and Iceland was probably caused by the Black Death in the former country, as the number of ships declined drastically after its onset.[17] It is against this background that foreign merchants from England, and later Germany, started to appear on the scene around 1400.

3.2 Bergen and the Hanseatic *Kontor*

According to Steinar Imsen, when the focus of political attention in Norway moved southeast during the thirteenth and fourteenth century, the town of Bergen on the western coast of Norway remained a kind of capital city for the *skattlands* in a fiscal and economic way.[18] Taxes were paid to the royal governor in the castle of Bergenhus, and trading ships sailed frequently between the city and the islands in the North Atlantic. It is hard to overstate the importance of the city as a commercial and political hub for Norway, the North Sea, and the North Atlantic.

Bergen owed its importance to its strategic location that was both halfway between the rich fishing grounds around the Lofoten archipelago and the European continent and at a reasonable distance from England and the North Atlantic islands (Figure 3.1). It has a good natural harbour, which is closed off

14 Imsen, "Introduction" (2014), 16, 20–26; Imsen, "Introduction" (2010), 21–22; Bjørshol Wærdahl, *Incorporation and Integration*, 270–271; Baldur Þórhallsson and Þorsteinn Kristinsson, "Iceland's External Affairs from 1400 to the Reformation: Anglo-German Economic and Societal Shelter in a Danish Political Vacuum", *Stjórnmál & Stjórnsýsla* 9 (2013): 121, 124–125.

15 *DI* 4:330; Imsen, "Royal Dominion", 53; Thomas, *Onze IJslandsvaarders*, 6.

16 Þorláksson, "King and Commerce", 215; Imsen, "Royal Dominion", 59.

17 Sigurðsson, "The Making of a 'Skattland'", 215; Þorsteinsson, "Island", 168.

18 Imsen, "Introduction" (2014), 26.

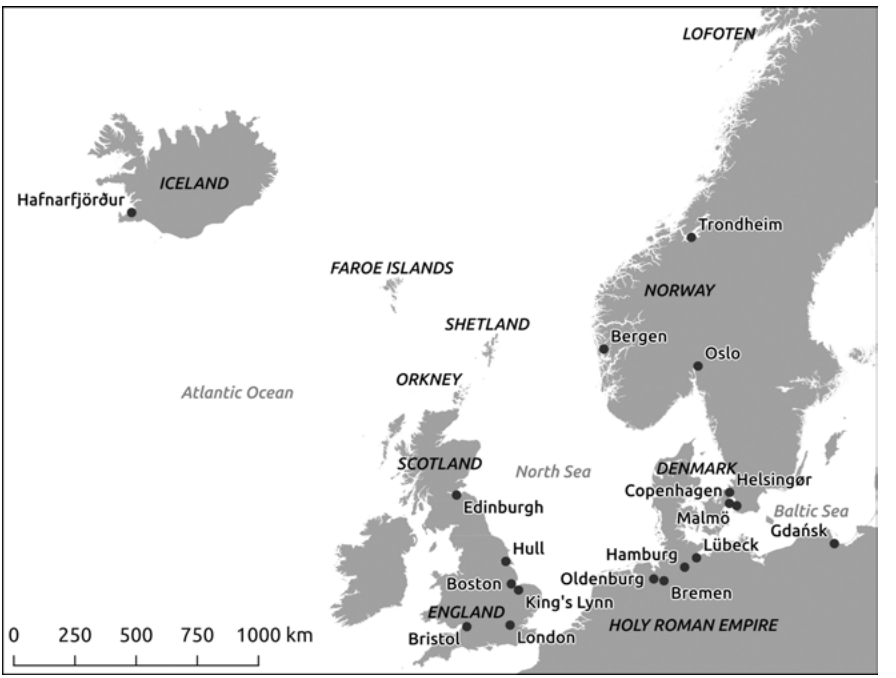

Figure 3.1: Map of the North Atlantic and North Sea region with important locations mentioned in the text.

from the open sea by a large number of islands and skerries. It is therefore not surprising that Bergen rose to prominence during the 11th century, when the Norwegian king asserted his dominance throughout his kingdom and related dominions. On the north side of the bay the castle Bergenhus was built, which in the early centuries was the base of Norwegian royal power. Next to it, a merchant settlement, Bryggen, came into being, which connected northern Norway to the rest of the realm and the British islands.[19]

In the course of the thirteenth century, German merchants began to make use of these trade routes. Previously they had started to defend their common

19 Mike Burkhardt, "Policy, Business, Privacy: Contacts Made by the Merchants of the Hanse Kontor in Bergen in the Late Middle Ages", in *Trade, Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange. Continuity and Change in the North Sea Area and the Baltic c. 1350–1750*, ed. Hanno Brand (Hilversum, 2005), 136–37; Geir Atle Ersland, "Bergen 1300–1600: A Trading Hub between the North and the Baltic Sea", in *The Routledge Handbook of Maritime Trade around Europe 1300–1600*, ed. Wim Blockmans, Michail Krom, and Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz (New York, 2017), 428–31.

trading interests abroad, in the process creating a trade network that became known as the *Hanse*, connecting much of northern Europe in their combined effort to wrest privileges from local rulers.[20] In Bergen, they appeared in the 1180s at the latest. At first the merchants were from Cologne and Westfalia; from the 1240s onwards the majority was from the recently founded trading towns on the Baltic Sea coast such as Rostock, Stralsund, and especially Lübeck, the last of which came to play a leading political role within the Hanse. These cities from the so-called "Wendish quarter" managed to negotiate trading privileges with the Norwegian king for all German-speaking merchants in 1278.[21]

It is crucial to note here, however, that the Hanse should not be seen as a united and static political league. Within the network, cities and merchants often pursued conflicting interests. For the North Sea towns of Bremen and Hamburg, interests in Norway were not always identical to those of the Wendish towns. Bremen, for example, acquired the same privileges as the other Hanseatic towns on its own in 1279, did not take part in the Hanseatic war with Norway in 1284, and sided with Norway in the negotiations for new privileges in 1294.[22] In 1343 King Magnus instituted new privileges for the Wendish towns and five years later did the same for Bremen. A similarly independent course was charted by Hamburg until *c*. 1320.[23] Even though they had joined the other Hanseatic towns by the time the *Kontor* was established in the 1360s, the conflicting interests of the Baltic and North Sea (and Zuiderzee) towns, due to their different trade networks, provided much of the ground for the disputes regarding the North Atlantic trade later.

Backed by their extensive European trade network, the Hanseatic merchants quickly out-competed the Norwegian merchants in Bergen. They settled in Bryggen (which came to be known as Tyskebryggen, 'the German Dock', Figure 3.2), took over the trade between Norway and the European continent and from *c*. 1280 that between Norway and Boston, England, as well, which was probably the main market for Norwegian stockfish at the time. By the 1310s the Norwegians had disappeared from the scene, leaving these trade routes to the Germans. The latter established a profitable "triangle trade", importing Baltic grain to Norway, which they sold for Norwegian stockfish. The fish in turn was exchanged for English wool and cloth in Boston, which was then

20 See Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 46–47, 59–61, 242–247; on the role of the Hanse in Bergen, see Johan Schreiner, *Hanseatene og Norge i det 16. århundrede* (Oslo, 1941); Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*; Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*; Burkhardt, *Bergenhandel*; Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*.

21 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 33–34, 49–53; Ersland, "Bergen", 435–437.

22 Hofmeister, "Bremens Handelsbeziehungen", 55–56.

23 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 87–89.

Figure 3.2: Bryggen in Bergen, the site of the Hanseatic *Kontor*. Drawing by J. J. Reichborn, 1768, image courtesy of the Bergen Byarkiv.

brought back to the German towns, possibly via Bruges.[24] English merchants, however, did remain active in Bergen.

The next step taken was the establishment of a *Kontor*, i.e. a permanent settlement of Hanseatic merchants in Bergen with their own laws and privileges. As early as the 1250s, German merchants had started to stay in Bergen during the winter. As their numbers grew, the Norwegian authorities were confronted with the need to include these residents in their legal system. The merchants for their part started to organise themselves by drawing up their own statutes (*willekor*), which were for the first time confirmed on a Hanseatic Diet in 1366. These statutes contained detailed rules about the hierarchy and organisation

24 Nedkvitne, 50–53, 79, 91–92; Riis, "Entwicklung", 34–35; Burkhardt, *Bergenhandel*, 170–172.

within the *Kontor* and for membership, as well as initiation rites for young merchants.[25] The permanent residents (*wintersitzer*) controlled the (credit) relations between stockfish producers in the North and the German merchants, and therefore also exercised a large degree of control over the merchants who only visited in summer. With the establishment of the *Kontor* at Bryggen, Bergen joined Novgorod, London, and Bruges as the most important outposts of the Hanse, albeit being the smallest in terms of trade volume.[26]

The *Kontor* and the trade with Bergen were dominated by merchants from Lübeck, with merchants from Bremen, Hamburg, and the Zuiderzee towns having a more marginal role.[27] In the later fifteenth century, however, as the stockfish trade with Boston declined, Lübeck gradually lost its dominant position, opening up the *Kontor* for merchants from the North Sea towns. As Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz has shown, merchants from the Zuiderzee region are registered considerably more often as *wintersitzer* in the late fifteenth century.[28] However, Bremen merchants became the dominant group in Bergen in the course of the sixteenth century, and would remain so until the abolition of the *Kontor* in 1764.[29]

For the Norwegian king, the reasons for granting the Hansards privileges in Bergen were on the one hand the importance of Baltic grain imports to Norway,[30]

25 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 346–351; Burkhardt, "Policy", 139–141; Ersland, "Bergen", 437–439.

26 Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 124–135; Burkhardt, "Policy", 137; "Die Ordnungen der vier Hansekontore Bergen, Brügge, London und Novgorod", in *Das Hansische Kontor zu Bergen und die Lübecker Bergenfahrer. International Workshop Lübeck 2003*, ed. Antjekathrin Graßmann, Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck 41 (Lübeck, 2005), 77.

27 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 223, 230, 334–442; Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*, 84–90; Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, ix–xxix.

28 Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*, 116–117.

29 Johan Henrik Schreiner, "Bremerne i Bergen", *Historisk tidsskrift* 42 (1963): 291–314; Herbert Föge, "Bremer Bergenfahrt und Bergenfahrer vom 16. – 18. Jahrhundert" (PhD thesis, Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel, 1958); Entholt and Beutin, *Bremen und Nordeuropa*, 11–12; Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 34; Thomas Hill, *Die Stadt und ihr Markt: Bremens Umlands- und Außenbeziehungen im Mittelalter (12.–15. Jahrhundert)* (Stuttgart, 2004), 200; Burkhardt, *Hansische Bergenhandel*, 95–96.

30 The extent to which Norway was dependent on imported grain for subsistence is debatable. In the North, the growing of grain was a challenging undertaking, in large part because of the vulnerability to climatic changes, but it was done. A colder period in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries might have forced Norway to import grain. On the other hand, the emergence of the stockfish production for export in northern Norway to accommodate growing foreign demand meant that people did not have to rely on subsistence agriculture for their survival, and started to concentrate on fishing instead, creating a dependency of foreign grain imports. See Section 2.1.2; Riis, "Entwicklung der norwegischen Wirtschaft", 33; Ersland, "Bergen", 441; Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 25–29.

and on the other the wish to protect the Norwegian economy from too much foreign influence. After all, the Hansards had already taken over much of the Norwegian trade with the continent and England. By establishing a staple in Bergen, the king and the nobility could easily partake in the trade and tax it.[31] In order to protect the staple, the Hanseatic privileges in Bergen from 1294 onwards include a clause that the Hansards were not allowed to trade anywhere in Norway other than Bergen, Oslo, and Tønsberg. In 1302, this prohibition was extended to include the *skattlands,* i.e. Iceland, the Faroes, Orkney, and Shetland.[32] Stockfish from the Lofoten, Vesterålen, and the *skattlands* had to be brought to Bergen by Norwegian merchants called *norderfahrer*, who sold the fish to the Hansards, who in turn distributed it to England and continental Europe.[33] Even though there are some indications that some merchants did not adhere to these rules, the members of the *Kontor* must generally have been inclined to respect the law. After all, the position of Bergen as the staple market for stockfish and their own privileges in the city gave them the possibility of controlling the stockfish trade.[34]

That this position was extremely favourable is illustrated by the fact that the Hanseatic merchants nearly eliminated the English presence in Bergen. During the fourteenth century, they already dominated the trade in stockfish between Norway and England, importing five to six times more stockfish into England than the English themselves did. However, their success did have one drawback. With the disappearance of the English from the stockfish trade between Norway and England, the German trade on that route went into decline as well, virtually disappearing by the 1480s. The reasons for this were the many conflicts between England and the Hanse, which disturbed the trade greatly, and the fact that the English started to look for fish in other areas, and found them in the waters around Iceland.[35]

31 Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 191–192.

32 *NGL* 3:53; *HUB* 2:18; Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 310; Sigurðsson, "The Making of a 'Skattland'", 194; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 189–190.

33 Burkhardt, "Policy, Business, Privacy", 147.

34 Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, "'Alle Goede Coepluyden . . .'. Strategies in the Scandinavian Trade Politics of Amsterdam and Lübeck *c.*1440–1560", in *The Dynamics of Economic Culture in the North Sea- and Baltic Region*, ed. Hanno Brand and Leos Müller (Hilversum, 2007), 88–89.

35 Mike Burkhardt, "One Hundred Years of Thriving Commerce at a Major English Sea Port. The Hanseatic Trade at Boston between 1370 and 1470", in *The Dynamics of Economic Culture in the North Sea- and Baltic Region*, ed. Hanno Brand and Leos Müller (Hilversum, 2007), 85; Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 184–186; Burkhardt, *Hansische Bergenhandel*, 172–174.

3.3 The English century

In Icelandic historiography, the fifteenth century has become known as *Enska öldin*, 'the English century', because the foreign trade with Iceland was dominated by English merchants in this period.[36] Spurred by German competition in Bergen and the many struggles between the English crown and the Hanse, which unsettled the trade between Bergen and English harbours, English merchants and fishermen started to sail to Iceland to buy stockfish and fish themselves around 1400. Where the stockfish trade had been centred at Boston, it was now mainly merchants from Bristol, East Anglia (King's Lynn), London, and Hull who were active in this trade (Figure 3.1).[37]

It is difficult to assess what exactly led to this English turn to Iceland. Þorsteinsson attributes this to a combination of factors, such as technological changes in English shipbuilding, poor fish catches in English waters, and last but not least, the difficult position of the English in Bergen.[38] Arnved Nedkvitne's statement that the English "changed their defeat in Bergen into a new beginning"[39] in Iceland goes too far in casting the Hanse as a monolithic power bloc, however. Although the beginning of the English century and the disappearance of the English from Bergen are clearly related, the causality is harder to pin down. It might very well be that the disappearance of the English from the Bergen stockfish trade was caused by the establishment of direct trade with Iceland more than the other way around, as Wendy Childs characterises the English turn to Iceland as "an example of commercial enterprise in cutting out middlemen and maximising profits".[40] Because the English had lost much of

36 The defining study on this subject is Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin*; see also Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 204–205 for a short overview of the historiography.

37 See Eleonora M. Carus-Wilson, "The Iceland Trade", in *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Eileen Power and M. M. Postan (London, 1933), 155–182, 381–383; Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin*; Bruce E. Gelsinger, *Icelandic Enterprise: Commerce and Economy in the Middle Ages* (Columbia, SC, 1981); Wendy R. Childs, *The Trade and Shipping of Hull, 1300–1500*, East Yorkshire Local History Society 43 (Beverley, 1990); Wendy R. Childs, "England's Icelandic Trade in the Fifteenth Century: The Role of Hull", *Northern Seas Yearbook* 5 (1995): 11–31; Wendy R. Childs, "The Internal and International Fish Trades of Medieval England and Wales: Control, Conflict and International Trade", in *England's Sea Fisheries. The Commercial Sea Fisheries of England and Wales since 1300*, ed. David J. Starkey, Chris Reid, and Neil Ashcroft (London, 2000), 32–35; Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 204–206.

38 Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 205–206; Þórhallsson and Kristinsson, "Iceland's External Affairs", 119, 121–122; Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin*, 24–30.

39 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 186.

40 Childs, "England's Icelandic Trade", 12; Þórhallsson and Kristinsson, "External Affairs", 122.

their influence in Bergen, the danger of damaging the Bergen staple became a minor issue.

It is equally impossible to pinpoint when the English traders first appeared on the scene. Usually the year 1412 is associated with the first evidence of English traders in Iceland, who were mentioned in the *Nýi annáll* as having overwintered. As Boulhosa has pointed out, however, this does not mean that they had not been there before, maybe even much earlier. The annal might have recorded the event only because it was deemed extraordinary that the English stayed in winter. The annals do mention foreign merchants in 1392 and 1397, but they might have been Norwegians or maybe even Germans, however.[41] Moreover, the presence of English fishermen is already attested in 1408.[42]

The arrival of the English in Iceland was beneficial to the Icelanders at first, as they were prepared to pay up to 70 percent more for stockfish than their Norwegian competitors.[43] Although the Icelanders probably did not invite the English sailings themselves, they must have welcomed the foreigners, as they were quick to ignore the trading bans. The bishops of Skálholt and Hólar, some of whom were English themselves, made active use of English ships, and it is likely that even the Danish-appointed governor traded with the English merchants.[44] However, English ships came both to trade and to fish, with the latter activity having been more important; it is estimated that more than 100 ships per year were sailing to Iceland.[45] Fishing in Icelandic waters was not welcomed by the Icelanders, but they tolerated it because the English brought their merchandise and because there was no way to stop them from fishing.[46] This changed when the Germans started to trade directly with Iceland as well. The Germans are not known to have fished in Iceland at all, concentrating on trading instead, and as such represented an attractive alternative to the English.[47]

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41 Boulhosa, "Fish and Ships", 181–183; Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin*, 24. See also the discussion about the first Hanseatic sailing to the North Atlantic in Section 3.4.1.

42 Þorsteinsson, "Island", 168–169; Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 206–208.

43 Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 211; Björn Þorsteinsson, *Tíu Þorskastríð 1415–1976* (Reykjavík, 1976), 11.

44 Andras Mortensen, "Økonomisk udvikling på Færøerne i senmiddelalderen", in *De vestnordiske landes fælleshistorie II: udvalg af foredrag holdt på VNH-konferencerne i Ísafjörður 2003, Tórshavn 2004 og Oslo 2005*, ed. Andras Mortensen, Alf R. Nielssen, and Jón Th. Thor (Nuuk, 2006), 100; Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin*, 147–152; Þórhallsson and Kristinsson, "External Affairs", 119; Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 6.

45 Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 208.

46 Agnarsdóttir, 214.

47 Þórhallsson and Kristinsson, "External Affairs", 120, 122.

The Danish king was not happy with the developments in the north, as they undermined the staple of Bergen (and the taxation connected with it), but proved to be rather powerless to do something about it. In part, this must have been because local officials and clergymen were doing good business with the English as well. The English trade with Iceland was prohibited in 1414 and again in 1429, but to no avail. Ships continued sailing north, and eventually the king must have decided to make the best of the situation and issued licences for sailing to Iceland, even if it remained officially prohibited. The licences meant that the king would profit from the illicit trade on the one hand, and secured the position of English merchants in Iceland on the other.[48]

The year 1467 proved to be the turning point in the "English century". An agreement had been made between the Danish and the English king that no English merchant was to travel to Iceland without having first acquired a written licence from the Danish-Norwegian king in 1465. Some English merchants, however, sailed without a licence to Iceland two years later, and came into conflict with the Governor Björn Þorleifsson, which led to his murder in Ríf. The next year, the Danes captured seven English ships in the Sound as retribution for this act, which drew the Hanse into the conflict as these ships were captured by privateers from Danzig (Gdańsk). In a period of already heightened tensions between the Hanse, Denmark, and England, King Edward IV ordered the seizure of the Steelyard (the Hanseatic *Kontor* in London) and the arrest of the merchants there. This sparked a war in which Hanseatic privateers and warships, largely from Danzig and Lübeck with some from Hamburg and Bremen, attacked English vessels on the North Sea; trade with England was prohibited by the Baltic Hanseatic towns until 1474.[49]

The conflict between England on the one side and Denmark and the Hanse on the other had significant consequences for commerce across the North Atlantic. On one hand, as Mike Burkhardt writes, the conflict was "the death blow to Lübeck's *Bergenfahrer's* trade with Boston",[50] from which it never recovered, and

48 Childs, "England's Icelandic Trade", 13–14; Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 207.

49 Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin*, 201–222; Þorsteinsson, "Island", 174; Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years: The History of a Marginal Society* (London, 2000), 121; see also Burkhardt, "Hanseatic Trade at Boston", 82–83; Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 402–408; Stuart Jenks, *England, die Hanse und Preußen : Handel und Diplomatie ; 1377–1474*, vol. 2, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte 38 (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), 710–736; Terence H. Lloyd, *England and the German Hanse, 1157–1611. A Study of Their Trade and Commercial Diplomacy* (Cambridge, 1991), 201–214; Kilian Baur, *Freunde und Feinde: Niederdeutsche, Dänen und die Hanse im Spätmittelalter (1376–1513)*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte NF 76 (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar, 2018), 330–331.

50 Burkhardt, "Hanseatic Trade at Boston", 82.

in more-general terms was exceptionally damaging to the Hanseatic trade with England. More important for the Icelandic trade, however, is that King Christian I of Denmark-Norway for the first time opened the North Atlantic trade to Hanseatic merchants in 1468, making an exception to the restrictions set forth in the Hanseatic privileges in Norway, in an attempt to break the English dominance in Iceland.[51]

Christian's tactic proved to be successful. Hanseatic merchants, who did not have to fear losing their Bergen privileges anymore, established direct trading connections with the North Atlantic islands over the following decade (see the following section). With the *Píningsdómur* of 1490, named after the governor of Iceland Didrick Pining, the Althing confirmed the rights of German traders as being on a par with the English.[52] In the same year, King John (Hans) allowed the Hollanders to trade in Iceland, who had been there before as well. If this was done with the same motive as the 1468 granting of permission to German traders, it was less successful, as there is very limited evidence for traders from Holland in Iceland before the seventeenth century.[53] The importance of the German presence in Iceland as a means to control the stockfish trade with England was underscored by Christian II's prohibition of the German trade with Iceland in 1513, except when the fish were brought directly from Iceland to England.[54]

The following period was characterised by growing competition between the English and German merchants in Iceland, which often ended in violence (Figure 3.3). This was related to the increase in English fishing activity in Iceland between 1490 and 1530, which as we have seen was very controversial among the Icelanders.[55] As early as 1486, merchants, skippers, and inhabitants of the English coastal cities complained to the king about the competition from the Germans, who "previously did not use to come [to Iceland], and the English were the only ones trading there, but now no English ship can go there without great danger, peril and adventure, because the Germans support the Danes against the English".[56] Tensions were heightened by the appointment of the

51 *HR* II, 6, p. 69; *DI* 16:220; Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin*, 222.

52 *DI* 6:617 (14900701TIN00); Ketilsson, *Kongelige Allernaadigste Forordninger*, 41–43; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 124–125; Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 128.

53 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 16–17; there are a few mentions of the activities of Holland merchants in Iceland in the fifteenth century; see Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 7–8.

54 *DI* 9:357; *DN* 6:657; *HR* III, 6, no. 515 (15130812NYK00)

55 Jones, "England's Icelandic Fishery", 106–107.

56 "Item se hebben nu late upgenomen alle de dait und hanterunge to Bergen in Norwegen und Islant, wor se in vortiiden nicht plegen to komen, sunder de Engelschen deden alle de dait und hanterunge dar, sunder nu mach geiin Engelsch schip dar nicht komen dan up grote sorge,

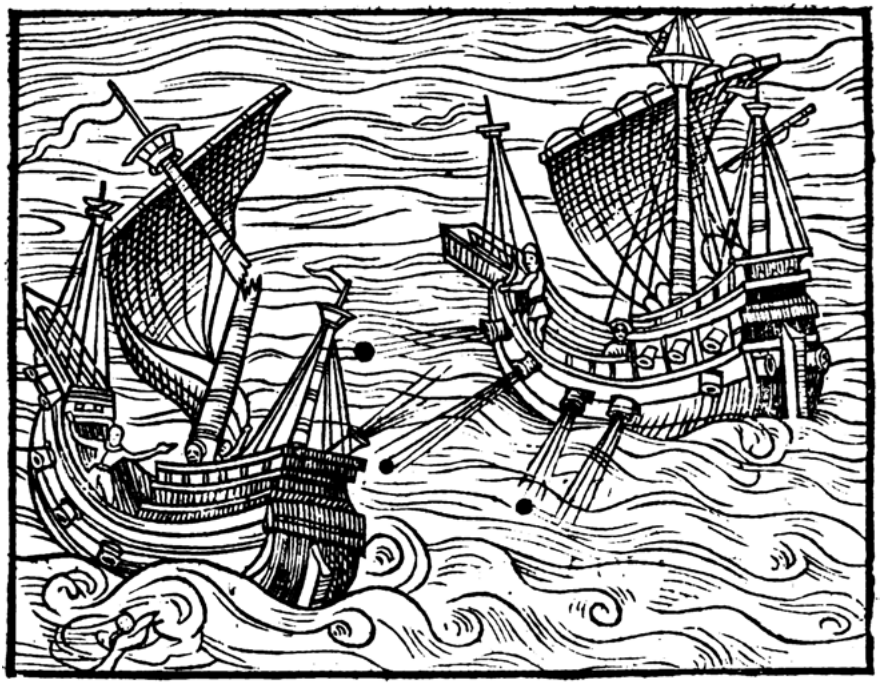

Figure 3.3: Battle at sea between merchant ships in Icelandic waters, from Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555).

German-born admiral Didrick Pining as the Danish governor in Iceland, who confiscated English property, to which the English Crown reacted by sending naval support for its fishing fleet in Iceland.[57] Between 1486 and 1532, Baasch has counted eight instances of conflict between Germans and English merchants in Iceland.[58] For example, in 1491 during negotiations in Antwerp, the English complained that two ships from Hull had been attacked in Hafnarfjörður by the crew of two German ships, with Pining's support.[59] On the other side Hamburg merchants complained later that in 1528, skipper Hinrick van Ronne

perikell und eventur, darumb dat de Oisterlinge biistain den Denen tegen de Engelschen, as id is vaken geprovet und bewiiset in des koniinges rait". *HR* III, 2, no. 31; *DI* 11:34.

57 Þorsteinsson, *Tíu Þorskastríð*; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 124. On Pining, see Section 4.4.1.1.

58 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 21.

59 *HR* III, 2, no. 511; *DI* 11:43; see also Baasch, 99.

had drowned along with 36 others after an English ship had collided with them on purpose.[60]

We would probably not have known about most of these cases, had the conflict not escalated in the summer of 1532. A fight broke out in Básendar between 30 men from a Hamburg ship led by skipper Lutke Schmidt, helped by 80 Germans and Icelanders, and two English ships with 140 men on board. One of the English ships, the *Thomas of Hull*, was accused of having sunk a German ship three years earlier in Eyjafjörður. The Germans won the fight, after which they beheaded two Englishmen and confiscated a quantity of stockfish. Two months later, conflict erupted in Grindavík, where John Breye from London was trading; he was accused of violence against the Icelanders and of having stolen an amount of stockfish that had been bought by some German merchants in Hafnarfjörður. The Germans, led by bailiff Didrick van Minden, gathered a party of 280 men from eight nearby ships from Hamburg and Bremen and plundered an English ship during the night, killing 15 men on board. The English king Henry VIII reacted furiously and demanded compensation for the damage, and also threatened to revoke the privileges of the German merchants in London. English attempts to gain compensation, however, came to naught due to the close ties between Lübeck and Hamburg and Denmark, cemented by their support for the Danish king Frederick I to gain the throne that same year. Frederick suggested that the English were largely to blame for the situation having gotten out of hand, because they were harming the Icelanders by fishing in their waters without giving them anything in return, whereas the Germans had helped the Icelandic governor by attempting to bring an end to this injustice.

The conflict evolved into a diplomatic crisis and envoy Thomas Lee was sent from London to Hamburg the beginning of the next year to seek a resolution. The Hamburg merchants, however, claiming that they were subjects of the king of Denmark and had only acted on order of the governor, sent Lee on to Denmark. In February 1533, negotiations took place in Segeberg, which accomplished nothing for the English. On the contrary, a document was produced, the *Abschied oder Verlaß von Segeberg*, which confirmed that the English had brought on the violent course of events by their own behaviour. The document was accepted by Lee, who promised to refrain from repercussions against the Hanseatic merchants in London, and thus avoided further escalation of the matter as had occurred in 1468.[61]

60 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 1a: summary of English attacks on Hamburg ships in Iceland, 1528 (15280000HAM00); Baasch, 99.

61 Reconstruction of these events is mainly based on the large body of documents in SAH 111–1 Islandica, vols. 1a and 1b. Most of these have been published in *DI* 16:285–337. For a

Although the rights of both German and English traders were confirmed at the Althing the same year,[62] these events brought the "English century" to a definitive end. There is little evidence of English trading in Iceland over the remainder of the sixteenth century, and they seem to have limited themselves to fishing, although still on a large scale. They remained active especially around the Vestmannaeyjar, and continued to trade there until 1558, when the islands were given to Simon Surbeck, later mayor of Copenhagen, who managed to drive them out with Scottish help.[63] However, English merchants never completely disappeared from the scene. In 1552, there are 42–60 English ships – mostly fishing vessels – recorded in Iceland, and 55 in 1593.[64] In the late sixteenth century, especially in the 1590s, English fishing and trading activity in Iceland increased,[65] to the point where they got into conflict with the German merchants again. In 1592, Hamburg merchants complained that the English fished so much in the waters around Iceland that there was nothing left for the Icelanders, and that they were hindering German trading ships.[66] In 1570, Lübeck merchant Luder Ottersen even was summoned before the Privy Council after the English complained that he had been interfering with their trade in Iceland.[67]

3.4 Direct German trade with the North Atlantic

3.4.1 Beginnings before 1468

When the English turned to Iceland in search of stockfish in the early fifteenth century, Hanseatic merchants were soon to follow. With the slow decline of the trade in Bergen in general and between Bergen and England specifically, they also tried to enter the North Atlantic stockfish market. That they had to infringe

narrative in greater detail see Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 21–28; Þorsteinsson, *Tíu Þorskastríð*; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 125–126; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 18–20; Gunnar Karlsson, *Lífsbjörg Íslendinga frá 10. öld til 16. aldar*, Handbók í íslenskri miðaldasögu 3 (Reykjavík, 2009), 304–308; Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 129–130.

62 *DI* 16:333B (15330630TIN00)

63 Þorsteinsson, "Island", 187.

64 Þorsteinsson, 184.

65 Jones, "Icelandic Fishery", 107; Agnarsdóttir, "English Century", 210; on the English fisheries and trade in Iceland from 1580 to 1630, see Helgi Þorláksson, *Sjórán og siglingar: enskíslensk samskipti 1580–1630* (Reykjavík, 1999).

66 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): letter of 10 October 1592 (15921010HAM00).

67 John Roche Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, vol. 7 (London, 1893), 395, 399–400. See also Section 7.2.6.

upon the privileges of their colleagues in Bergen by doing so must have been a relatively small problem for merchants from cities not significantly involved in the Bergen trade at the time, such as Bremen and Hamburg. However, in other Hanseatic cities with a strong involvement in the Bergen trade, such as Lübeck, there were merchants as well who made voyages into the North Atlantic to expand their trade network.[68]

The exact beginning and scope of this early Hanseatic sailing to the North Atlantic are difficult to pin down. This is due to the scarce sources and the problems with their interpretation. Moreover, quite some shaky assumptions have been made with regard to this topic by historians in the past in their urge to trace German presence in the North Atlantic as far back as possible. Notably, they have tried to show that many towns were involved in the North Atlantic trade from an early stage and with a considerable number of ships. Upon closer inspection, however, we find that these claims are based on a quite specific reading of the sources and disregard other possible explanations, and are therefore tentative to say the least.[69]

Generally speaking, two kinds of sources hint at the early presence of German traders in Iceland: annals and prohibitions related to the privileges of Hanseatic traders in Bergen. The problems with the annals have been discussed above, and in relation to the German presence the same conclusions apply as to the English. The Icelandic annals do speak regularly of foreign visitors before the fifteenth century, but without further specification, so that there is no way of knowing whether Norwegians, English, Germans, or others are meant.

For the other sources, often the historian's rule of thumb is applied that if a historical source prohibits an activity, that activity must therefore have taken place. Although this makes sense in general, there are two problems with this assumption with regards to the North Atlantic trade. The first is that it does not tell us anything about the scope of the violations of the rule. The second is that prohibitions to sail to the *skattlands* are often repeated in new confirmations of

68 Much of this chapter is based on the excellent analysis of the topic of the North Atlantic trade, as it was discussed on the Hanseatic Diets, by Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", which is a revised and extended version of "The North Atlantic Trade with Iceland, Shetland, Orkney and the Faroes and the Policy of the Hanseatic Diet (1369–1535)", in *German Trade in the North Atlantic, c. 1400–1700. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Natascha Mehler, Mark Gardiner, and Endre Elvestad, AmS-Skrifter 27 (Stavanger, 2019), 27–42.

69 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, and Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 66–79, most notably, have put forward many of these assumptions. Their works are still relied upon as the ground-breaking reference works for historians writing about the history of German trade in Iceland and Shetland, respectively. Þorsteinsson, "Island", 171–172, presents a more nuanced view, but his article, written in Danish, has largely been disregarded in German historiography.

the old Hanseatic privileges in Bergen, for example after a change of throne or a conflict. That means that the entire set of rules and regulations was repeated, which therefore does not necessarily point to a violation of any of the prohibitions in particular. Even the original prohibition to sail to the North Atlantic cannot be necessarily considered evidence for Hanseatic commercial activity in that region, as this was intrinsically connected to the establishment of Bergen as a staple port, the very essence of which was not to trade elsewhere. Therefore, if Ernst Baasch writes that the confirmation of Hanseatic privileges in Bergen in 1294 means that the Germans "therefore already at that time practised this trade"[70] (i.e. with Iceland), or when Rolf Hammel-Kiesow implies that Hanseatic merchants sailed to the North Atlantic before 1369, based on a letter from the Hanseatic Diet to the *Kontor* in Bergen which mentions the *vørbøden reyse* ('forbidden voyage') but does not specify which voyage exactly was forbidden,[71] or when Arnbjørn Mortensen states that the reiterations of the prohibition to sail to the *skattlands* in 1302 and 1348 indicate that Hanseatic merchants were active in the Faroes around that time,[72] we should keep in mind that there is no unequivocal evidence in the written sources to support these statements. Hanseatic merchants might have been in the North Atlantic in the fourteenth century or before, but they might also have not.

Furthermore, clear prohibitions of the North Atlantic trade until 1468 that indicate that it was actually undertaken are hard to interpret as well, and they might have been related to single, not structural, violations of the trading ban. The first of these was in 1416, when the Hanseatic Diet explicitly prohibited direct trade with Orkney, Shetland, and the Faroe Islands in response to complaints by the eldermen of the Bergen *Kontor* that merchants were engaging in this trade.[73] Friedland links this prohibition to a 1419 charter, in which the heirs of Heinrich Sparke from Lübeck gave the power to a man in Bergen to reclaim Sparke's outstanding debts with the bishop of Orkney.[74] Because Sparke can be shown to be still alive in 1414,[75] Friedland concludes that he must have

70 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 4. Baasch's contention is especially questionable, as the prohibition to sail to the *skattlands* was first included in the Hanseatic privileges in Bergen in 1302 (*NGL* 3:53; *HUB* 2:18). Furthermore, he gives no further evidence other than the annals, which do regularly mention foreign traders but do not specify their nationality.

71 *HR* I, 1, no. 511; *NGL* 2:346; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 190. The prohibition of the *vørbøden reyse* was repeated in 1412: *HR* I, 6, no. 70 §14, 15. Here the text seems to hint at trading in Norway outside Bergen, Oslo, and Tønsberg.

72 Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar undir fríum handli*, 8.

73 *HR* I, 6, nos. 262, 275, 276; *HUB* 6:89.

74 *HUB* 6:255; *DN* 1:665; Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 68.

75 Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 36n4.

traded with Orkney around 1415.[76] Next to the uncertain dating (it might also have been written *after* the Bergen complaints of 1416), the charter does not give us any evidence that Sparke had traded directly with Orkney (or Shetland, which belonged to the diocese of Orkney). Rather, the appointment of an agent in Bergen hints at the possibility that Sparke traded with representatives of the bishop of Orkney in Bergen, which was not against the rules of the Bergen staple.

In 1425, when the Danish king Eric of Pomerania prohibited the trade with northern Norway, Iceland, and the other *skattlands* explicitly, he remarked that it had started recently.[77] This remark may be taken quite literally. Although the prohibition is unclear about the specific region in which trade was occurring, an English complaint from 1521 mentions that Hamburg merchants had sailed to Básendar in 1423 and harassed traders from Hull there.[78] It could be that the king was referring to this specific event, although here, also, the evidence is quite tentative. As Adolf Hofmeister remarks, it is curious that the 1423 event is first mentioned only a century later and is very similar to an English complaint about Hamburg merchants in Iceland from 1491, which also describes an attack of Hamburg merchants on Hull merchants in Básendar that took place in the late 1480s.[79]

It is curious that the 1425 prohibition was not discussed at a Hanseatic Diet. Between 1416 and 1468, the matter was only discussed once, in 1434/5. The Hanseatic *Kontor* in Bruges petitioned the diet to repeat its 1416 interdiction of the trade with the tributary lands (without mentioning Iceland). The involvement of the Bruges *Kontor* might seem remarkable, but as they depended on a staple market as well, a lax general attitude within the Hanse with regard to staple trade would be potentially damaging to their own position in the long run, and thus they took up the matter as a central problem within the Hanse.

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76 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 68. Also note Friedland's remark that the order in which the island groups are mentioned in the *Hanserecess* of 1416 (i.e. Orkney, Shetland, Faroes) "clearly relates to the order in which the Hanseatic merchants penetrated [the North Atlantic]". Although this is – without further evidence – a remark without much factual value to begin with, the connection with the case of Heinrich Sparke undermines the contention even further. After all, there is no evidence that Sparke traded with the Faroes. Rather, the mention of these islands in this context must be seen as part and parcel of the general regulation that Hansards were not supposed to trade with the *skattlands* directly.

77 "att thennd sedwanne som nyliigt begijnt er off Thijdske och anndre wdlenndske mennd, som icke erre lougliige giftte wdij Norrige, att the haffve seylet och seyle till Helliglannd, Finndtmarckit, Isslannd och annden (stedtz)". *HUB* 6:582.

78 *HR* III, 7, no. 455, §14–15; See Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 68n12.

79 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 28. Cf. *HR* III, 2, no. 511, §25.

The diet responded that it would investigate the case and discuss the matter, but no action seems to have been taken afterwards.[80]

A curious aspect of this letter is the fact that it speaks about *Vynlande*, *Orkenoy*, and *Veroe* as the North Atlantic Islands. *Vynland* is known only from the sagas concerning the Viking explorations in North America,[81] but that is not likely to have been meant here, and neither is Finland. Other possibilities are that it is a faulty interpretation of Finnmark, a district in northern Norway, and therefore off limits for Hanseatic merchants as well,[82] or an error of the scribe of the letter, who read *Vynlande* instead of *Hydlande* (Shetland) in the text of the 1416 prohibition.[83] The latter explanation might be the most plausible, as the letter clearly refers to the 1416 prohibition, but it is very likely that the Bruges *Kontor* was referring to the Icelandic trade as well.

The discussion at the Hanseatic Diet notably coincides with entries in the Danzig *Schöffenbuch* from 1435 about two journeys to Iceland by the Danzig skipper Peter Dambeke, undertaken in 1432/3 and 1434, which were probably largely unsuccessful, as Dambeke could not find enough fish on the island and had to sail to England instead.[84] The Bruges *Kontor* clearly interpreted this as violating the 1416 ban – even if Iceland is not explicitly named there – since in the answer of the gathered envoys at the diet, the matter is treated as "about the matter, that no one shall sail to Iceland etc.", and the other islands are not even mentioned![85]

Another early testimony for the North Atlantic trade is from 1442, when Lübeck merchant Cordt Sten paid Remmert Ulenhot 100 mark to sail to Iceland to look for his brother Henning and to bring him back to Lübeck if he was still alive.[86] The fact that Sten had to send someone to Iceland specially to look for his brother indicates that regular connections with Iceland had not been established at the time. Also it did not spark debate at a Hanseatic Diet.

Finally, other kinds of documents have been used as evidence of early German presence in the North Atlantic as well, but again these prove to be questionable on closer inspection. For example, Kurt Forstreuter interprets the text of two 1439 documents as being evidence for the involvement of Danzig

80 *HR* II, 1, no. 393, §12; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 193–195.

81 See Forstreuter, "Hansische Islandfahrt", 117n2.

82 Forstreuter, 117.

83 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 69.

84 *DI* 5:10–12; *HUB* 7:81; *DN* 20:806; see Forstreuter, "Hansische Islandfahrt"; "Nachtrag", 77–79; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 7.

85 "van deme puncte, dat nemand in Islande seghelen sal etc". *HR* II, 2, no. 394, §10.

86 *UBL* 8:61; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 7; Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 12.

councillor Bertolt Buramer and Johan Hamborch (probably from Lübeck) in the Icelandic trade.[87] A charter from 17 June by which Olaf Nilsson, the commander of Bergen and governor of Iceland, authorised his servant to Iceland to collect the royal taxes and outstanding debts for himself and Buramer, is interpreted as evidence for the latter's role in collecting the taxes in Iceland. The text of the charter, however, is ambiguous, and it is possible that only the outstanding debts of Buramer in Iceland are meant, which does not have to mean that he traded there *directly*, especially since the charter was written in Bergen.[88] Likewise, a note in Lübeck's *Niederstadtbuch* two days earlier mentions that Johan Hamborch gave Buramer the right to his goods in Iceland. It is likely that Nilsson's servant was ordered to collect these goods in Iceland for Buramer, but once again the text does not permit the conclusion that Hamborch had traded in Iceland directly.[89] Likely his outstanding debts in Iceland were meant here, for which he might have extended credit to Norwegian or Icelandic merchants visiting Bergen.

There are no further indications for direct German connections with the North Atlantic until 1468. Considering the problematic interpretations of many of these sources, it might do well to stick to Arnved Nedkvitne's conclusion that the prohibition to trade with the *skattlands* was "violated by individual skippers, [but] the violators must have been few and far between".[90]

3.4.2 The attitude of the Hanseatic Diets

Generally speaking, Hanseatic merchants must have been inclined to respect the rules set out by the Danish-Norwegian kings in the Hanseatic privileges in Norway, as it safeguarded their control of the stockfish trade in the staple port of Bergen. However, three factors complicated the Hanseatic attitude towards the North Atlantic trade: the changing dynamics of the stockfish trade (especially with England), conflicting interests between merchants from different

87 Forstreuter, "Hansische Islandfahrt", 118–119.

88 "Vpp at bera mins herra kongsins skatt og skulld epterstaudur ok sakrhræra". *DI* 4:626. Probably only the outstanding debts and movable property refer to Buramer. Both Nilsson and Buramer are known to have been in close relation to the Danish king Eric of Pomerania, which might explain why Nilsson assisted Buramer in collecting his debts on the island. Help from local authorities in collecting debts was not unusual in the Bergen trade: see Section 4.2.1; Nedkvitne, *Hansa*, 408–412.

89 "Dimisit omnia bona que ipse dimisit in Island". AHL, Niederstadtbuch 1430–1451, p. 604; German summary in *HUB* 7:471.

90 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 310.

towns within the Hanse, and the often-changing political circumstances. Therefore, at first glance the protocols (*Rezesse*) of the Hanseatic Diets in the fifteenth century do not condemn the North Atlantic trade as unanimously as would be expected.[91] Or to put it in Klaus Friedland's words: "It is hopeless to attempt to build up a clear picture from the statutes and ordinances of the Diet and the Danish crown".[92]

Friedland, however, was not only exaggerating; he is disregarding the internal dynamics of the Hanse. His statement seems to be based on two false assumptions: first, that the Hanse was a unified bloc of cities and merchants in which all had the same interests, and second, that there already existed considerable traffic of Hanseatic merchants with the North Atlantic. If one takes the international political context and the conflicting interests of different towns into account, the picture built up from the statutes and ordinances of the diet and the Danish crown makes more sense, as Rolf Hammel-Kiesow has shown. Generally speaking, this picture is that the North Atlantic trade was condemned if it was prohibited by the Danish crown, and tolerated when it was not (even if it harmed the position of Bergen). The policy of the Danish crown, on the other hand, was highly dependent on other political issues such as those involving the English.

One interesting point is that only the direct trade with Orkney, Shetland, and the Faroes was explicitly prohibited in the diets.[93] Direct trade with Iceland was never explicitly prohibited in these diets, except for the debatable case in 1434 sketched above. Regular complaints against German merchants for trading directly with Iceland were filed by the *Kontor* in Bergen, among others, but the diet never managed to produce a clear prohibition of the Icelandic trade, at most stating that the gathered cities promised to refrain from the Icelandic trade. There were two possible reasons for this. First, the Hanse may have wanted to retain their merchants' dominance in the international stockfish trade, which was threatened by the English activities in Iceland.[94] Representatives of the various cities who came together at the Hanseatic Diets might therefore have been more favourably disposed towards trade with Iceland than with Shetland and the Faroes, where the Hansards experienced less competition from the English. A remark in the *Rezess* of the Hanseatic Diet in Bremen in 1494 hints at this line of reasoning, as the direct trade with the *skattlands* was once again prohibited there,

91 For the Hanseatic Diets, see Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 116–123.

92 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 69; citation translated in Hammel-Kiesow, "North Atlantic Trade", 28.

93 Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 190.

94 Hammel-Kiesow, 190.

"with the exception of Iceland, which is also visited by other nations"[95] (i.e. the English).

It is also quite possible that the frequent prohibition of the trade with Orkney, Shetland, and the Faroes was more a result of the sailings to Iceland than of actual direct trade with these *skattlands*. After all, there is no unambiguous evidence of direct trade with Orkney, and the first direct evidence for Shetland is only in 1494 (from Bremen),[96] and for the Faroes in 1486 (from Danzig).[97] The Bergen *Kontor*, sensing the diminishing support within the Hanse for upholding the prohibition of the Icelandic trade, might have emphasised the prohibition to sail to Orkney, Shetland, and the Faroes in order to limit the damage done to their privileges. One could even argue that this points at a limited interest of Hanseatic merchants in the Faroes and Shetland, as it was apparently not difficult to make the diet forbid the trade with those places on multiple occasions.

Second, there were the interests of the cities of Bremen and Hamburg in the Hanse in general, and in the stockfish trade in particular.[98] This proved to be a complicating factor in defining a clear Hanseatic prohibition of the Icelandic trade. As we have seen, due to their differing trade networks, the North Sea towns were less involved in Bergen, and their interests often clashed with those of the cities of the Wendish quarter.[99] The latter, which were largely dependent on Lübeck, usually supported the faction that voted to uphold the staple trade of Bergen.[100] The North Atlantic trade of Bremen and Hamburg merchants, who tried to enter into the stockfish trade in the fifteenth century, could therefore very well have been a result of their attempts to circumvent the Lübeck-dominated Bergen *Kontor*, as Mike Burkhardt proposes.[101] One should note, however, that the evidence for a Hanseatic presence in the North Atlantic before 1468 does not point towards a specifically high level of involvement of the North Sea cities

95 "Uthgenomen Island, de de fromde natien ok vorsoken". *HR* III, 3, no. 353 (14940525BRE00).

96 In a letter from the eldermen of the Bergen *Kontor* to the Hanseatic Diet in Lübeck from 1498: *HR* III, 4, no. 68.

97 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 70–71. Friedland also gives an earlier reference for Danzig (and Hamburg) activity in Shetland in 1487, but this is questionable. His statement is based on *HR* III, 2 no. 160, in which the representatives of all the cities condemn the trade with Shetland and the Faroes, except for Danzig and Hamburg, who claim not to have had permission of their city councils to decide about this matter. This does not have to mean more than that. Moreover, it could refer to the Faroes only, as in 1486, merchants from Danzig had been accused by members of the Bergen *Kontor* of having sailed to Iceland and the Faroes (*HR* III, 2, no. 54).

98 For Bremen, see Hill, *Die Stadt und ihr Markt*, 337–370.

99 Burkhardt, *Hansische Bergenhandel*, 67–70.

100 Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 193–194.

101 Burkhardt, *Hansische Bergenhandel*, 93–96.

in this trade. It is merchants from Hamburg, Lübeck, and Danzig who can be identified as having sailed north, which once again hints at the individual character of these undertakings.

3.4.3 Conflicting interests within the Hanse after 1468

The situation changed considerably in 1468. On the one hand, King Christian I allowed the Germans to trade with Iceland after conflicts with the English there, as we have seen. On the other hand, he pawned Orkney and in the following year Shetland to Scotland for the dowry of his daughter Margaret, who married the Scottish king James III. Christian never managed to pay the money, and the Scottish parliament annexed the islands in 1472.[102] Although Shetland was still linked commercially to Bergen, and trade with the islands still prohibited according to the *Kontor*'s privileges, the loss of direct Danish control over Shetland might have changed the situation for the Hansards. However, it is not until 1498 that we find the first clear evidence for Hanseatic merchants in Shetland, as we have seen.

After 1468, there is ample evidence of openly conducted commercial activity in Iceland by merchants from various Hanseatic towns.[103] The wreck of Bremen skipper Marten Stene's ship in Shetland, who was on his way to Iceland for a merchant from Braunschweig, is attested in 1469, for example.[104] The city of Hamburg even actively stimulated trade, testifying to its eagerness to enter into the stockfish trade through the newly opened market. Mentioned in the city's accounts of 1476 are two ships being sent to Iceland: one, the *Hispanigerd*, partly owned by the city and partly by Dideric Vriensteen, had made the voyage the previous year as well; and the other, the *Grote Marie*, was completely owned by the city. Freighting space on both ships was rented out to merchants; the stockfish trade on the city's account remained limited.[105] In 1479, Casper

102 For the political background of these events, see Barbara E. Crawford, "The Pledging of the Islands in 1469: The Historical Background", in *Shetland and the Outside World 1469–1969*, ed. Donald J. Withrington (Oxford, 1983), 32–48.

103 Þorsteinsson, "Island", 175.

104 *DI* 10:26; *HUB* 9:686, 9:800; Ludwig Hänselmann, "Braunschweiger und Bremer auf der Islandfahrt", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 17 (1888): 168–172. This is the only evidence for the involvement of merchants from Braunschweig, an inland city, in the Icelandic trade.

105 Karl Koppmann, ed., *Kämmereirechnungen der Stadt Hamburg 3: 1471–1500* (Hamburg, 1878), 223, 253; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 8; Christina Deggim, *Hafenleben in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: Seehandel und Arbeitsregelungen in Hamburg und Kopenhagen vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*, Schriften des Deutschen Schiffahrtsmuseums 62 (Hamburg, 2005), 157.

Weinreich's chronicle of Danzig mentions a ship from that city owned by Ludke Wispendorf that had set sail for Iceland but stranded at the islet Nidingen in the Kattegat.[106]

The Hanseatic presence in Iceland was even discussed openly, but was never controversial during this time. In 1473, during the negotiations in Utrecht that concluded the Anglo-Hanseatic war, the story was brought up of two ships from Holland that had battled with four English ships near Hafnarfjörður two years earlier. Two ships were taken captive by the Dutch, including a German ship that had been captured by the English in Iceland before. They were brought to Amsterdam, and the Germans, apparently from Hamburg, were freed.[107] The Hanseatic Diet of 1476 in Lübeck, which discussed the treaty, asked the English king to compensate the involved parties, and asked Lübeck to return a ship to the English that they had captured in Iceland in 1475.[108] Although it thus had become very clear that various towns were active in the Icelandic trade in the 1470s, this reality did not spur any reaction from the Bergen *Kontor*.

However, after 1481, when the Norwegian Council of the Realm tried to prohibit the North Atlantic trade again after Christian I's death, it immediately became the subject of discussions at the Hanseatic Diets, as the Council asked the Diet to prohibit the trade as well.[109] The eldermen of the Bergen *Kontor* joined in at the Diet in 1482 to complain about the damage being done to Bergen's position by the direct trade with Iceland. The representatives of Hamburg, as the main actor in the direct Icelandic trade, had to withdraw from the negotiations, and the city's merchants had to retreat from the Icelandic trade (with the exception of those ships that had already been prepared for the journey) until the next diet could come to a definite agreement about the matter.[110] The great number of sources from the 1480s in which the North Atlantic trade is discussed are therefore not necessarily signs of a sudden upsurge in economic activity in the North Atlantic, as Baasch claims,[111] but should be seen instead against the background of this trading ban.

What followed was a period in which the interests of the cities active in the Iceland trade, Hamburg first and foremost, clashed more and more with those

106 Caspar Weinreich, *Caspar Weinreich's Danziger Chronik: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Danzigs, der Lande Preussen und Polen, des Hansabundes und der Nordischen Reiche*, ed. Theodor Hirsch (Vaduz, 1973), 23.

107 *HR* II, 7, no. 39, §30; *DI* 11:22; Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 8–9.

108 *HR* II, 7, no. 348; *DI* 12:26.

109 *HR* III, 1, nos. 350–351; *DI* 6:362, 6:363; *DN* 6:589, 3:931.

110 Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 196.

111 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 10–11.

of the Bergen *Kontor*, while at the same time those same cities tried to come to a consensus at the Hanseatic Diets, which resulted in a "faintly absurd Hanseatic deliberate confusion", as Hammel-Kiesow describes it.[112] After more than a decade of open commercial activity in the North Atlantic, the position of Bremen and Hamburg in the North Atlantic trade had apparently become so firmly established that it would be much to their disadvantage if they were to prohibit it.[113] While putting up a show of cooperation, they hid behind one another, attached unrealistic conditions to a possible prohibition, sailed from other harbours so they could claim to not trade with the North Atlantic, or downright ignored trading bans while claiming to uphold them. This led to a number of curious examples of diplomatic statements that seemed to ban the trade but actually maintained the status quo.

In the case of Hamburg, there was another complicating factor: in 1483 riots broke out in the town due to a shortage of grain. Protesters criticised the export of grain to Iceland when there was not enough to feed the own population.[114] Under pressure from both the population and the Hanseatic Diet, the city council adopted a resolution which banned the Icelandic trade, but left a huge back door open: the ban was only valid "as far as the city area extends, where the council will see that in the city no ship is freighted".[115] Indeed, during the Diet of the Wendish towns in 1484, Hamburg could honestly state that no ship had left the city for Iceland. The representatives of the Bergen *Kontor,*

112 Hammel-Kiesow, "The North Atlantic Trade", 32.

113 Signs of the continuing direct trade with Iceland are the frequent mentions of Icelandic fish and sulphur in the Hamburg pound toll register in autumn 1486, at the time of the year when ships returned from Iceland. However, as the registers do not indicate which route these products took, it cannot be excluded that they found their way to Hamburg via Bergen. Hormuth, Jahnke, and Loebert, *Pfundgeldlisten*, 225–227, 238.

114 *HR* III, 1, pp. 348–349, n. 6; *DI* 11:31; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 11–12. These riots were deemed important enough to be included in the *Fitjaannáll*, one of the Icelandic annals written in the seventeenth century. Between sentences about the birth of Martin Luther is written: "Á þessu ári var mjög mikið upphlaup innbyrðis í Hamborg" ('in this year there were large riots of the citizens in Hamburg'). It is unclear whether the author mentions the matter because of the Icelandic element, since he makes no mention of it. Hannes Þorsteinsson and Jón Jóhannesson, eds., *Annales Islandici posteriorum sæculorum. Annálar 1400–1800*, vol. 2 (Reykjavík, 1922), 25.

115 "ßo verne der stadt ghebede kereth, dar de radth myth dem bestenn wyll vorweßenn, dath in der stadt ghebede nene schepe laden werde". Johann Christian Lünig, *Das Teutsche Reichs-Archiv Partis Specialis IV. und letzte Continuation*, vol. 13 (Leipzig, 1714), 960; Johann Heinrich Bartels, ed., *Nachtrag zum neuen Abdrucke der vier Haupt-Grundgesetze der Hamburgischen Verfassung : Betreffend 1) die älteren Recesse, 2) die Buhrsprache, und 3) Zusätze zu der den vier Haupt-Grundgesetzen vorausgeschickten erläuternden Uebersicht* (Hamburg, 1825), 23; Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 157.

however, made the charge that Hamburg merchants had loaded a ship destined for Iceland in Wismar. As the gathered representatives of the cities claimed that they had not received instructions about this matter, it was left unresolved, but it was agreed upon that letters be sent to Bremen, Danzig, and other non-Wendish cities from which merchants were sailing to Iceland, asking the authorities to put a stop to this. In the letter to Danzig, it was even said that the Norwegian Council of the Realm had threatened to renounce the Hanseatic privileges in Bergen.[116]

Discussion of this issue continued during the diets over the course of the decade (1486, 1487, and 1489).[117] The arguments brought forth emphasised that the North Atlantic trade harmed Bergen's debt system, as stockfish produced on the islands was now directly transported elsewhere instead of being brought to Bergen, where the stockfish producers still had debts with Bergen's *Wintersitzer*. This seemed to have been the case mainly for Shetland and the Faroes, however, as it was claimed that Icelandic fish was never brought to Bergen and that the English also traded in Iceland.[118]

During the 1489 Diet of the Wendish quarter the representatives came closest to explicitly prohibiting the Icelandic trade, at least in words, as in practice the wording of the prohibition allowed the trade to go on. The Wendish cities (Rostock, Stralsund, Wismar, Lüneburg, and Lübeck) proclaimed that they would abstain from the Icelandic trade altogether if Hamburg would do likewise. The same should be written to Bremen, not part of the Wendish quarter and therefore note represented at the diet.[119] Of course, Hamburg had shown six years earlier that it had too much at stake in Iceland, so it would never abandon the trade freely, and the other cities must have known this, which made the ban in fact a tacit acceptance of this situation.

In 1489–90, the Danish crown relaxed its policy towards foreign trade in Iceland. From this point onwards, the Icelandic trade was more or less (but not yet openly) tolerated by the Hanseatic towns, with the frequent complaints from the Bergen *Kontor* emphasising the unfair competition of the North Atlantic

116 *HR* III, 1, no. 501 §92–97, no. 510; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 196–197; Friedland, "Lübeck und Island", 160–161.

117 *HR* III, 2, nos. 31, 54, 160, 164, 269, 270 §28, 30; *DI* 11:34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41; *DN* 5:932 (14870500LUB00).

118 Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 197; see also Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 400–412; Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*, 148–152; and Section 4.2.

119 *HR* III, 2, no. 270, §28, 30; *DI* 11:41; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 197–198. These were the towns with representatives present at the meeting and there was thus the appearance of a unanimous decision. Note that this does not support the conclusion of Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 16, that all of these towns were apparently involved in the Icelandic trade.

merchants in the stockfish trade, instead of that trade being a violation of their privileges. The trade with Shetland and the Faroes was a different matter, although it also proved impossible to prohibit in the long run. In 1494, the Hanseatic Diet in Bremen, at which representatives from all cities known to trade with the North Atlantic were present, resolved to renew the 1416 prohibition to sail to the Faroes and Shetland, but once again did not mention Iceland. Those who sailed to these islands risked losing their rights to Hanseatic privileges and were to be rejected from all Hanseatic towns.[120] Regardless of these threats, eldermen of the Bergen *Kontor* complained four years later that Bremen merchants were using the same tricks as Hamburg with regard to the Icelandic trade in 1483, and were fitting out ships to sail to Shetland from ports in Holstein or East Frisia, with consent of the local lords.[121] Once again, in 1507, representatives from Kampen and Deventer objected to the Shetland stockfish trade, on the basis that *rotscher* could be acquired very cheaply there, undercutting the position of "good" (i.e. Bergen) *rotscher* on the Hanseatic markets, suggesting that (Bremen) merchants were still actively trading directly with Shetland.[122]

3.4.4 The sixteenth century: Gradual Hanseatic acceptance

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Bergen *Kontor* seems to have been the main opponent of the Icelandic trade, but it was losing support. In 1511 and 1517 the Hanseatic Diet stated that merchants in Iceland should behave peacefully towards the English, without mentioning the illicit character of their presence there.[123] King Christian II, who realised that he could not stop the North Atlantic trade completely, permitted the Germans to bring Icelandic fish to England but not to Germany during negotiations in Copenhagen in 1513.[124]

Of course, this ban proved impossible to enforce,[125] and the Bergen *Kontor* complained in vain in the course of the next years about the North Atlantic trade, this time employing the argument that it was damaging the position of the Hanse and the *Kontor*. In 1514, the *Kontor* complained that the North Atlantic

120 *HR* III, 3, no. 353 §85–87 (14940525BRE00).

121 *HR* III, 4, no. 68; *DI* 11:47 (14980405BER00); Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 198.

122 "Dairover die lude bedrogen worden". *HR* III, 9, no. 698 §2; *DI* 11:57.

123 Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 198.

124 *HR* III, 6, no. 515; *DI* 9:357; *DN* 6:657 (15130812NYK00).

125 This was repeated in 1515, under threat of loss of privileges and the exclusion from harbours in the realm. *HR* III, 6, no. 673; *DI* 8:432; *DN* 6:659.

merchants were flooding the market with cheap Icelandic stockfish,[126] and in 1517 that those who were trading with the North Atlantic damaged the common good.[127] They received support from the London Steelyard a year later, which stated that the North Atlantic competition with the English and the resulting conflicts were negatively affecting their position in London.[128] The North Atlantic trade now became an argument in the struggle of the *Kontors* to survive, as was stated in 1519 by the eldermen from Bergen. They claimed that the Novgorod *Kontor* had already been abolished, and those of London and Bruges were severely weakened, and the same would happen to Bergen if the North Atlantic trade continued.[129]

The representatives of Bremen and Hamburg, the merchants of which had by this time more or less divided the North Atlantic between themselves, halfheartedly tried to pacify the Bergen *Kontor*, but refused to end the trade in the north. In 1517, Bremen stated that it would refrain from the North Atlantic trade if merchants of the other towns would do likewise, which of course would never happen.[130] Whereas the eldermen from Bergen had claimed in 1514 that annually six to ten ships were sailing from Hamburg to Iceland and back, the representatives of Hamburg in 1519 presented their alternative facts: they claimed that only a few ships exported fish from Iceland to England, and a negligible number to Hamburg, and then only if a storm happened to drive them to the Elbe. Moreover, they stated that the city council would be willing to follow the diet's decision, but its citizens would never agree, especially given the fact that the Icelandic trade had already resulted in riots in 1483 (thereby deliberately ignoring the fact that these riots had been directed *against* the trade with Iceland). As the diet decided that Hamburg should subject its interests to the common good, and only export fish from Iceland to England, even if a ship was driven by storm to the Elbe, Hamburg's representatives answered that they would report this decision to the council, but emphasised that it was unjust to prohibit an activity that had been permitted in 1494 in Bremen.[131] Of course this was a very liberal interpretation of the 1494 resolution, which had not mentioned Iceland.

126 *HR* III, 9, no. 737 §3, 4; Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 211–214. See Section 2.1.1.
127 *HR* III, 7, no. 51.
128 *HR* III, 7, no. 110 §13, 16; *DI* 11:66.
129 *HR* III, 7, no. 154 §10; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 199–200.
130 *HR* III, 7, no. 39 §165, nos. 190–192.
131 *HR* III, 7, no. 151 §2, no. 197 §41–43; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 200.

In October of the same year, a neutral arbiter from Lüneburg was appointed to resolve the conflict. This time Hamburg clearly put its own interests first by stating that its merchants had to make a living somehow and had been treated badly in Bergen (having to pay higher fees to the *Kontor* than the merchants of other towns) and refused to accept the verdict of the arbiter. They claimed that they would discuss the matter in the city council and send negotiators to Lübeck to respond, but there are no sources which can confirm that this actually happened.[132] Bremen and Hamburg in the following years would continue to contest any proscription of the transport of Icelandic fish to England only.

In 1524, the Bergen *Kontor* was not able to convince the Hanseatic cities to prohibit the North Atlantic trade any longer. During negotiations in Copenhagen, a new version of the privileges drafted by Lübeck's Bergen merchants was approved by Lübeck's secretary Paul vam Velde, "with the exception of the Icelandic voyage, which shall be tolerated because of Hamburg, who now has very good relations with the [Danish] royal majesty".[133] In 1525, this was confirmed by the mayor of Lübeck, who told the Bergen eldermen to accept the Icelandic trade. The 1494 ban on trade with the Faroes and Shetland was reaffirmed in spite of protests from Bremen, which was trying to legalise its Shetland trade,[134] but this had little effect in practice. By 1535, when Bremen and Hamburg complained about obstruction of their trade with Iceland, the Faroes, and Shetland, the North Atlantic trade had become firmly established.[135]

Later Hanseatic attitudes towards the North Atlantic trade are difficult to reconstruct, due to the fact that the resolutions of the Hanseatic Diets after 1537 have not been edited. However, there is little indication that the North Atlantic trade was ever controversial after that time; discussions were limited to trade in northern Norway instead (which remained prohibited by the *Kontor* privileges, but was also being disregarded more and more).[136] The Bergen *Kontor* had become less influential within the Hanse, Lübeck merchants had become less influential within the *Kontor*, and the Bergen merchants had become less influential

132 Hammel-Kiesow, 201.

133 "Uthgenamen van der Islandesschen reyse; de sulve scholde stan blyven umbe der Hamburger wyllen, de nu groth gehor hedden by k. w." *HR* III, 8, no. 820 §92.

134 *HR* III, 9, no. 131, §161–163; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 202.

135 *HR* IV, 2, no. 86; Hammel-Kiesow, 202. The importance of the North Atlantic trade at this time is also indicated by the Bremen customs registers of 1539, which recorded 78,199 pounds of Icelandic fish and 40,400 pounds of Shetland fish, in comparison to 88,134 pounds of unmarked (i.e. probably Norwegian) fish (Witzendorff, "Bremens Handel", 167). As often with toll registers, however, it is not possible to say which route these commodities took. See also Section 1.1.

136 Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 202.

within the city of Lübeck.[137] In the course of the sixteenth century, merchants from Bremen became the dominant party in the *Kontor*, the members of which seem to have accepted that Norway and the North Atlantic had become separate trading regions.[138] Of course, Lübeck merchants, albeit to a lesser extent, were also active in Iceland, but the demise of Lübeck dominance in Bergen and the gradual acceptance of the North Atlantic trade on the Hanseatic Diets were related phenomena. Whether there is a causal relation, however, is a question that is hard to answer. Rather, these developments should be seen in the light of structural economic and political changes around 1500.

Still, the North Atlantic trade remained officially prohibited under the privileges of the Bergen *Kontor*. That they never officially sanctioned the North Atlantic trade, even though power relations within the *Kontor* had shifted, can probably be attributed to their dependence on the Danish-Norwegian king and the importance of the staple of Bergen for their business. In 1545 the Danish king stated that the Hanseatic trade with Iceland, although openly practiced, was officially still prohibited and only tolerated by him.[139] And Lübeck members of the Bergen *Kontor* are known to have complained about the direct trade with Iceland as late as 1566 and 1570, stating that Icelandic stockfish should be brought only to England. However, they no longer demanded that the North Atlantic trade be totally abolished.[140]

The merchants active in the North Atlantic trade ignored the official prohibition on a grand scale and profited from the new status quo. The attitude towards this trade reflected in Hamburg's city laws is significant in this respect. Where the Icelandic trade had been officially prohibited after the riots in 1483, just six years later the city council allowed it again, on the condition that all ships should sail from, be freighted in, and return to Hamburg. This regulation was reiterated often and made stricter over the course of the sixteenth century. Penalties were exclusion from the Icelandic trade, confiscation of a part of the commodities, or even loss of citizenship. Moreover, paragraph 51 of the *Große Rezess* of 1529 stipulated that the trade in England, Bergen, Iceland, and everywhere else should be stimulated for the sake of the city and its inhabitants.[141]

137 Burkhardt, *Hansische Bergenhandel*, 70.

138 Burkhardt, 96; Entholt and Beutin, *Bremen und Nordeuropa*, 10–11.

139 *DI* 11:341 (15450320KOL01).

140 Johann Peter Willebrandt, *Hansische chronick: aus beglaubten nachrichten zusammen getragen* (Lübeck, 1748), pt. III, p. 115; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 18–19.

141 Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 157–58; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 37–38.

In essence, the municipal authorities were trying to make Hamburg a staple market for Icelandic products.[142]

These policies sought to enhance the city's economy and to exclude others from its trade with the North Atlantic. It became prohibited for non-Hamburg ships to be loaded before the citizens' own ships were full, and non-citizens were not allowed to bring their cargo onto a particular ship before citizens had done so.[143] In 1547, after Iceland had been leased to Copenhagen for ten years (see Section 3.5.2), the Hamburg council reacted by preventing citizens to sail from other towns to Iceland.[144] Indeed in the same year, Lübeck merchants complained to Hamburg that the city council would not allow to let a ship depart from Lübeck for Iceland with a crew consisting largely of Hamburg citizens; a similar instance is recorded in 1557.[145] Moreover, in 1579 and 1603, the prohibition to sail from other cities than Hamburg to Iceland was reiterated.[146]

Lübeck and Bremen, which saw their own interests in the North Atlantic threatened by Hamburg's open attempts to establish a monopoly on the North Atlantic trade, regularly tried to counteract this by presenting an argument in favour of Hanseatic cooperation. In 1560, the new Danish king Frederick II revived the Hanseatic privileges in his realm in the Diet of Odense. The resolutions gave more freedom to Danish merchants in Hanseatic towns, among others, and reaffirmed the old Bergen privileges.[147] When Frederick prohibited the Icelandic sulphur trade a year later, representatives of Lübeck and Hamburg, the merchants of which had been active in this trade, both complained. Where Hamburg emphasised its long tradition in trading in Iceland, Lübeck presented the Hanseatic argument, stating that this prohibition was an attack on the Hanseatic privileges in Danish waters and threatened the welfare of the Hanseatic towns and merchants, even though those privileges had just been confirmed in Odense.[148] Lübeck, however, conveniently neglected to mention that the Bergen *Kontor* had always used exactly the same arguments *against* the North Atlantic trade, and that the Odense resolutions had not mentioned Iceland at all. Moreover, in 1565 burgomaster Bartholomeus Tinappel, who as

142 This went for the Icelandic trade only. Note that the council did prohibit the trade with Trondheim, Stavanger, and Lindesnes in Norway to protect the *Kontor* in Bergen. Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 158.

143 Deggim, 157.

144 Deggim, 158.

145 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 39. SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3 (15470408LUB00, 15570320LUB00).

146 Baasch, 47, 52.

147 Baasch, 39; Paul Simson, ed., *Danziger Inventar 1531–1891* (München, 1913), 867–870.

148 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22/23): complaint from Lübeck, 28 February 1561 (15610228LUB00).

councillor of the city had attended the Diet of Odense, acquired a licence for the harbour Dýrafjörður in Iceland, which had been in use by Hamburg before. He could do so because he had served as an admiral of the Danish fleet in the Northern Seven Years' War with Sweden. In so doing he was pursuing his personal mercantile interests at the expense of Hamburg's interests, effectively damaging the Hanseatic common good that Lübeck claimed to uphold.[149]

Thus the argument for the common Hanseatic interest was adopted as a convenient rhetorical trick when a city saw its interests in the North Atlantic threatened by merchants from another Hanseatic city – usually Hamburg. For example, the Bremen merchants who traded in the North Atlantic made appeals to Hanseatic friendship in their complaints to the Hamburg city council, when they feared losing the use of a harbour to Hamburg merchants.[150]

3.5 Policy of the Danish-Norwegian crown

3.5.1 Developments up until the Count's Feud

As shown above, royal control over the North Atlantic islands was marginal when the English and German merchants established their first direct trading connections in that region in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This explains that the Danish kings tried to prohibit the trade at first (in 1414, 1425, and 1429), but realised this effort was in vain as they had no real means to control the trade. The English even kidnapped the Danish governor of Iceland in 1425 when he tried to enforce the ban. Eventually, licences for English traders were introduced, even though the trade formally remained prohibited,[151] and Christian I legalised the trade for German merchants in 1468 after the English had killed the Icelandic governor. Although they had little direct power in the north, the Danish kings had the advantage of having direct control over the Øresund, and used this as a means of pressuring foreign powers. The closing of

149 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): request for the licence, 11 August 1565 (15650811KOB00); DI 14:289 (15650814KOB00). See Section 3.5.4.

150 SAH, 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3: complaint from Bremen about Hamburg interference in Berufjörður, 7 April 1579 (15790407BRE00), states for example that "hensische verwandten" should not interfere with each other's business.

151 Þórhallsson and Kristinsson, "Iceland's External Affairs", 124–125.

the Sound to English ships, as for example in 1468, was quite effective in limiting foreign influence in the *skattlands*.[152]

The Danish policy also had a strong fiscal dimension: each ship trading with the *skattlands* was taxed in Bergen (*sekkjagjald*).[153] Ships trading directly between the *skattlands* and the European continent or the British Isles, however, were not. When it became clear that the prohibitions had no effect, the Danish king tried to make the best of a bad bargain: the sale of licences meant that the crown would have income from commercial activity that would otherwise remain untaxed. This was especially urgent in the case of Christian I, who was often in financial difficulty as a result of his acquisition of Schleswig and Holstein in 1460.[154] In 1463, the *sekkjagjald* was changed into a harbour tax that was levied in Iceland instead of Bergen.[155] However, Christian was careful to prevent foreigners to settle in the North Atlantic and establish a permanent presence, as they had done in Bergen. The prohibition for foreign traders to stay in Iceland during the winter is attested from 1480 onwards and was never revoked, regardless of frequent violations.[156]

The opportunistic attitude of Christian I was not popular in Norway, where the Council of the Realm tried to protect the staple of Bergen. Violations of the staple, tolerated by the king, and the giving away of Norwegian *skattlands* to other potentates, threatened to further marginalise the Norwegian kingdom. It is therefore not surprising that the Norwegian Council of the Realm tried to prohibit the direct foreign trade with Iceland after Christian's death in 1481.[157] At first this effort seemed to be successful. King John (Hans), Christian's successor, promised in Halmstad in 1483 to prohibit the foreign trade with Iceland,[158] but he quickly changed his mind. In 1490 he allowed the English to fish and trade in Iceland on the condition that they paid the taxes, and allowed the Hollanders to trade there "just like the Germans". The governor Didrick Pining announced these measures in Iceland upon his arrival that same year, and the Althing that summer approved them.[159]

The resulting document, known after Pining as the *Píningsdómur*, set out the rights and duties of foreign traders in Iceland for decades, and would remain in

152 Þórhallsson and Kristinsson, 125; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 122.

153 Imsen, "Royal Dominion", 59.

154 See Erik Arup, "Den finansielle side af erhvervelsen af hertugdømmerne 1460–1487", *Historisk tidsskrift* 7 (1902): 317–388, 399–489.

155 Karlsson, *Lífsbjörg Íslendinga*, 270.

156 Oddgeir Stephensen and Jón Sigurðsson, eds., *Lovsamling for Island*, vol. 1: 1096–1720 (Copenhagen, 1853), 37; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 9.

157 *DN* 3:931; *DI* 6:363; *HR* III, 1, no. 351 (14810912BER00).

158 *DI* 6:419; *DN* 13:148; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 16.

159 *DI* 8:72; *DI* 6:605; *DN* 6:609 (14900328KOB00); Þórhallsson and Kristinsson, "Iceland's External Affairs", 123, 126–127; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 16–17; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 124–125.

effect until the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in 1601. It declared that English and Germans should trade peacefully and avoid conflict with one another, and that no foreign merchant could stay in winter, except if he was sick or wounded or his ship was damaged. If a merchant did stay in winter, he was not allowed to sell his goods for a higher price than in summer, to have Icelanders in his service, or to own and use fishing boats. For the Icelanders, it was declared that all who had no livestock of their own were obliged to work for farmers. The latter rule was probably an attempt of the rich Icelandic landowning elite to limit the influence of the foreign trade by preventing poor people to start fishing or trading on their own account. Although the Icelandic administration had little means to enforce the *Píningsdómur*, and violations of it were frequent, its rules were reiterated many times and never modified during the sixteenth century.[160]

The political turmoil that characterised Danish politics in the 1520s and 1530s proved to be beneficial to the position of the German merchants in the North Atlantic. Baasch is probably right when he characterises this period as "the peak of the Hanseatic Iceland trade".[161] The German merchants in Iceland were left in peace by the Danish officials, partly because the latter were concerned with political troubles at home, and partly because of the great influence of the cities of Lübeck and Hamburg in Danish politics of the time. It is characteristic that the winter stay – which remained officially prohibited – does seem to have been practised relatively openly in this period. This is probably the nearest the German merchants ever came to establishing a permanent presence in Iceland, culminating in the building of a church in Hafnarfjörður by Hamburg merchants.[162] Moreover, Germans actively cooperated with local officials, as is shown by the incidents with the English in 1532.

However, it is uncertain if this period was also the peak of German trade in Iceland in an economic sense. Statistical data are absent: there are no indications of trade volumes, and the annual lists of ships in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne start only in 1532 and are unreliable for the first decade. However, they do give some indication that the number of ships sailing to Iceland from Hamburg was considerably larger in the 1580s and 1590s than ever before (Figure 3.4). At least based on these data, it seems to be an exaggeration

160 *DI* 6:617; SAH 111–1 Islandica vol. 1a (Low German translation) (14900701TIN00). A modern German translation can be found in Hildegard Bonde, "Die Berichte der isländischen Quellen über Didrik Pining", *Mitteilungen der Islandfreunde* 21 (1935): 71–76; see also Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 124–125.

161 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 31; Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 14.

162 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 31, 109–110; Piper, "Die Kirche der Islandfahrer", 227–232. See Section 5.4.3.

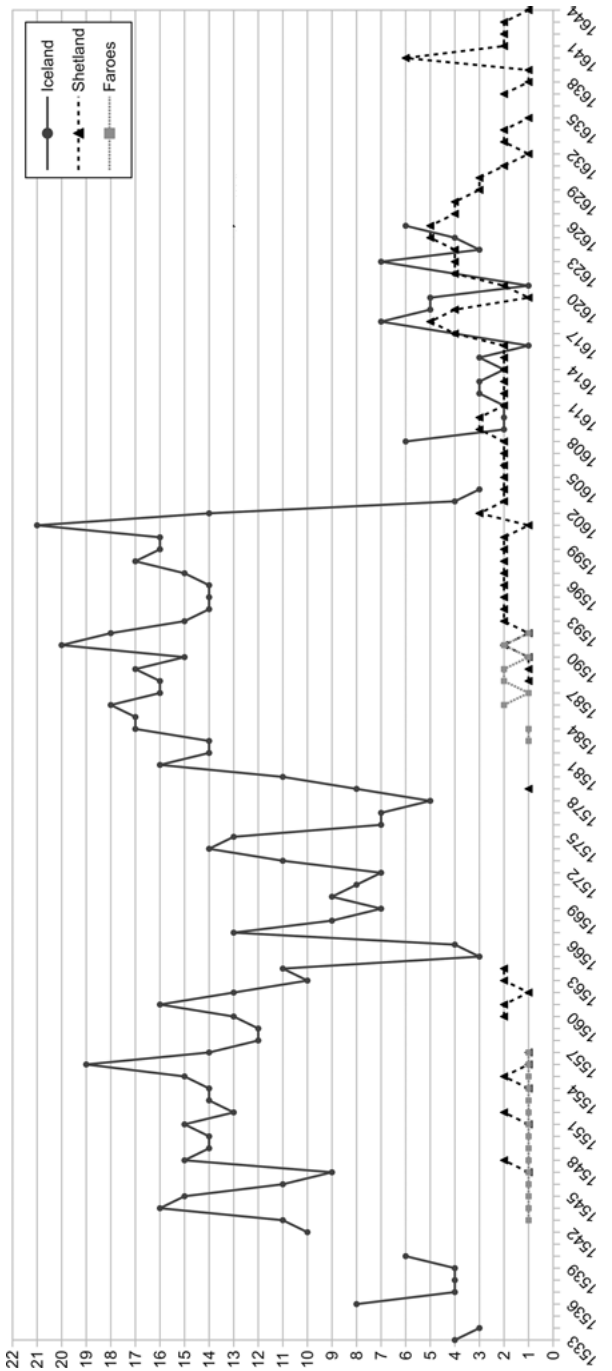

Figure 3.4: Number of sailings between the North Atlantic and Hamburg, 1533–1644. Based on the donation registers of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants, Hamburg.

to state that the German presence in Iceland peaked in the 1530s and then entered into a slow decline.[163]

This period started with the ascent of King Christian II to the Danish throne, who ironically tried to limit the North Atlantic trade at first and bring it back under control of Bergen. He must have realised, however, that it was impossible to prevent the direct trade between England and Iceland, and therefore prohibited the Hansards in 1513 to trade in Iceland, unless they brought the fish to England.[164] Christian's actions, however, were mainly directed against the influence of the Hanse and the nobility in the Danish realm. He seems to have regarded the *skattlands* merely as sources of income. In 1518, when he was gathering funds for military actions against Sweden, he tried to pawn Iceland to the city of Amsterdam for a loan. The asked-for sum, however, was too high and the deal was declined.[165] In 1520, he gave the Faroe Islands to the Hamburg merchant Joachim Wullenwever as a fief, possibly also in return for a loan.[166] When he had to flee to the Netherlands in 1523, he continued this policy. In an attempt to gather funds for a campaign to reclaim the Danish throne, he once again (unsuccessfully) tried to pawn Iceland and the Faroes for a loan, this time to England in the winter of 1523/4.[167]

Christian's successor Frederick I was supported in his coup by Lübeck and Hamburg, who had been annoyed by Christian's anti-Hanseatic policy. After Frederick succeeded to the throne, Lübeck warships helped to defeat the supporters of Christian in 1524 and were instrumental in capturing him when he tried to conquer Norway in 1532.[168] The influence of the cities in Denmark was beneficial to both parties: Lübeck received Bornholm and income from Gotland, and Frederick accepted Hamburg presence in Iceland, as the prohibition to sail to Iceland was removed from the privileges of the *Kontor* in Bergen, as we have seen.[169] Moreover, Frederick was also supportive of foreign influence

163 Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 127.

164 *DN* 6:657; *DI* 9:357; *HR* III, 6, no. 515 (15130812NYK00); Alex Wittendorff, *Gyldendal og Politikens Danmarkshistorie. 7: På Guds og herskabs nåde : 1500–1600* (Copenhagen, 1989), 76.

165 Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 10.

166 See Section 3.6.

167 *DN* 10:382, 412; Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 11; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 164.

168 Werner Jochmann and Hans-Dieter Loose, *Hamburg: Geschichte der Stadt und ihrer Bewohner* (Hamburg, 1982), 201–202; Wittendorff, *På Guds og herskabs nåde*, 93–101; Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, "Frühe Neuzeit und Reformation: Das Ende der Großmachtstellung und die Neuorientierung der Stadtgemeinschaft", in *Lübeckische Geschichte*, ed. Antjekathrin Graßmann, 4th ed. (Lübeck, 2008), 383–387, 403–404.

169 *HR* III, 8, no. 820 §92. See Section 3.4.4.

on the Faroes, as he gave the islands to his former secretary Thomas Koppen from Hamburg in 1529.[170] The close connections between the Hanseatic cities and the administration of Frederick I can be seen clearly in the conflict between English and German traders in Iceland in 1532, as discussed above.

Frederick's death triggered the civil war known as the Count's Feud, in which Lübeck sought to extend its privileges in Scandinavia by supporting the Count of Oldenburg, who tried to free the former king Christian. In this struggle, the North Atlantic played a role as well, as the Count of Oldenburg gave the island in Christian's name to the Lübeck general Marx Meyer, who appointed his brother Gerdt as governor. However, Lübeck's strategy backfired: Meyer was captured, much of the occupied land was retaken by the new king Christian III, and Lübeck lost a great deal of its influence in Denmark.[171] As Helge bei der Wieden has noted, the short-lived enfeoffment of Meyer with Iceland, going against the interests of Lübeck's Bergen traders, was (at least symbolically) the end of the protection of the Bergen *Kontor* in Lübeck.[172] Moreover, the end of the Count's Feud in 1536 meant the abolishment of the Norwegian Council of the Realm, which had been the main opponent of the North Atlantic trade and protector of the Bergen staple, along with the Bergen *Kontor*.[173]

Maybe not surprisingly, shortly afterwards we find the first evidence for direct trade between Lübeck and Iceland since the middle of the fifteenth century, which would remain small but constant during the rest of the sixteenth century. Indeed, it had been so long since Lübeck ships had sailed to Iceland that Hamburg chronicler Bernd Gyseke noted in 1538 "that it has never has been heard of before, that someone from Lübeck sailed to Iceland".[174]

3.5.2 The reformation and mercantilism in Iceland

With the end of the Count's Feud, the consolidation of political power in the hands of Christian III and the introduction of the Reformation in the Danish

170 See Section 3.6.

171 Wittendorff, *På Guds og herskabs nåde*, 177–190.

172 Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 14–15.

173 Hammel-Kiesow, "Politik", 194, 202n97; Wittendorff, *På Guds og herskabs nåde*, 215.

174 "Anno 38 int vorjar do reden de van Lubeke erstmals twe scepe in Island, dat vorhen newerle gehort was, dat de Lubeschen in Island segelden. Auerst van den tween quam man een scip in Island vnd van dar hir wedder vp de Elue". Johann Martin Lappenberg, ed., *Hamburgische Chroniken in niedersächsischer Sprache*, reprint (Wiesbaden, 1971), 149. See Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 14–15; Friedland, "Lübeck und Island", 158, 163.

realm, the Danish state embarked on the attempt to impose ever-greater control on its lands, both in a political and economic sense. For the German trade with the *skattlands*, this is important in two aspects, first the introduction of the Reformation in Iceland and the Faroes, and second the introduction of mercantilist policies in the trade with the *skattlands*.

It is tempting to assign a significant role to German, and specifically Hamburg, merchants in Iceland in the spread of the Reformation, given their dominant position in European connections with the island. After all, Hamburg, which introduced the Lutheran Church Ordinance in 1529, had developed into a major centre for the spread of the Reformation. These ideas must naturally also have spread to the North Atlantic, as the shipping route with Hamburg was the artery of Icelandic connections with mainland Europe at the time. The church built by Hamburg merchants in Hafnarfjörður in the 1530s probably was the site of the first Lutheran services on Iceland, and it is known from the accounts of the confraternity of St Anne that Hamburg merchants also imported printed books to the island, probably containing religious texts.[175] Moreover, Bishop Ögmundur Pálsson of the southern diocese of Skálholt complained in 1534 to the bishop of Stavanger that "foreigners" were trying to introduce the new faith in several places.[176]

However, the contribution of German merchants seems to have remained limited to providing the infrastructure for the Reformation in Iceland, which has been characterised as a "revolution from above". A popular Protestant movement does not seem to have existed among Icelanders, except for a small group of clerics in Skálholt, some of whom had studied in Germany. In fact, it was the Danish attempts to take control of the extensive property of the church, and in the process consolidate their political power on the island, which predominantly drove the process of the Reformation.[177] For their part, Hamburg merchants were concerned that the chaotic situation on the island might damage their trade interests. After all, they were doing a great deal of business with the church, by far the largest landowner in Iceland at the time. After the Danish bailiff in Bessastaðir, Didrick van Minden (the brother of a Hamburg merchant), had taken possession of the monastery of Viðey by force in 1539 and was subsequently killed in Skálholt, the Hamburg merchants wrote a letter to the king in which they asked

175 Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 135; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 128.
176 *DI* 9:570; Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 136.
177 Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, 195; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 128–129.

him to refrain from punitive action, because it would lead to escalation and damage their trade, especially with regards to their outstanding debts.[178]

In the same year, Bishop Ögmundur was replaced in Skálholt by Gizur Einarsson, a Lutheran, who was appointed superintendent by the Danish king. The northern diocese, however, remained Catholic under Bishop Jón Arason, which was tolerated for the time being. This situation would last until 1548, when Bishop Gizur died and Jón Arason attempted to take control of Iceland and to return it to the old faith by taking Gizur's successor Marteinn Einarsson prisoner. His plan to remove the last elements of resistance to his rule backfired, however, and Jón was himself taken prisoner and beheaded in 1550. Christian III sent warships the next year to restore order on the island and to appropriate monastic property. This action made him the second-largest landowner on Iceland, firming up his control over the island.[179]

Christian also accused the Hamburg merchants of having supported Jón Arason against the Danish crown.[180] Although this might seem like an odd alliance, and the role of the Hamburg merchants in this is unclear, it is not completely unlikely. The accusation should be seen against the background of the other means by which the Danish king tried to bring Iceland under his control, which was by mercantilist measures. Economic developments in Europe, especially the rising demand for and prices of grain, on which the Danish economy relied heavily, combined with the relative stability of Danish politics after the civil war, provided the Danish crown with the means to impose ever-greater control of and stimulate economic activity throughout the realm. The increase in English, Dutch, and Hanseatic shipping through the Øresund, while the land route between Hamburg and Lübeck lost importance, greatly boosted the income flowing into the royal treasury, especially after the Sound Toll was changed to a tax on a ship's cargo in 1567. Connected to this was the growing prominence of the city of Copenhagen, with its merchant class of Danish and German descent, in the export of highly sought-after Danish grain to Western Europe and other parts of the Danish realm. All this put the kingdom of Denmark in a central position on the economic and political map of Europe.[181]

178 *DI* 10:224, 225 (15400116HAM00, 15400118HAM00); Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation*, 186–196.
179 Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 132–133.
180 *DI* 12:98: "oc same biscop haffuer vdj mange andre maade skickett sig wtilbørligen oc som en whørsom vndersotte, huilcket wij forsee oss till att hand icke giortt hagde, ther som thett icke haffde weritt the Hamborger tilskyndelsz". Þorsteinsson, "Island", 186; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 35; Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 12–13; Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 264.
181 Jochmann and Loose, *Hamburg*, 204; Albert Olsen, "Nogle Synspunkter for dansk merkantilistisk Erhvervspolitik", *Scandia* 3 (1930): 226–229; Ole Feldbæk, *Danmarks økonomiske historie*

The first attempts to take greater control over the North Atlantic trade were small but significant. In the 1540s Christian III took steps to make the foreign merchants in Iceland respect the rules set out in the *Píningsdómur* again. The prohibition against the winter stay was reiterated in 1542, at the Althing in 1545, and once again in 1548.[182] In 1544 governor Otto Stigsen confiscated fishing boats from Hamburg merchants on Iceland, because foreigners were not allowed to have them. Hamburg protested loudly against this action, and sent a delegation led by merchant Lutke Schmidt (who had played a significant role in the English-German conflict in Iceland in 1532) and jurist Adam Scheidewint to Kolding to discuss the matter before the Danish Council of the Realm in March 1545. Hamburg claimed that they were doing the Icelanders a favour by providing them boats to fish that they otherwise would not have been able to acquire. Stigsen responded with a long list of complaints against the Hamburg merchants, who were accused of violating the ban on the winter stay, intimidating the locals, using their own weights and measures, and taking the law into their own hands at the trading sites. Also, he subtly reminded the Hamburg merchants that officially the entire North Atlantic trade was still prohibited, and that they were only tolerated through the king's "special favour and will".[183] The council decided in his favour, showing the Hamburg merchants for the first time in several decades that there was a limit to their influence on the island.[184]

The next step came in 1547, when Christian III attempted to lease the entire island to the city of Copenhagen for ten years against a fixed annual payment of 1000 Lübeck mark for three or four years. In return, the city would receive all revenues in taxes and penalties. The lease required the city to provide commodities to the inhabitants and to appoint a governor, who would stay on the island the entire year.[185] The action was clearly intended to counter the dominance of foreigners on Iceland, and the governor, Lorentz Mule, quickly came into conflict with the Hamburg and Lübeck traders in Iceland. The main issue was the enforcement of the prohibition of the winter stay. In December 1549 Mule arrested five merchant apprentices (*kaufgeseelen*) from Lübeck and Hamburg

1500–1840 (Herning, 1993), 28–29, 45–51; Wittendorff, *På Guds og herskabs nåde*, 15–18, 231–237, 283–288; For the Sound Toll, see Ole Degn, *Tolden i Sundet: toldopkrævning, politik og skibsfart i Øresund 1429–1857* (Copenhagen, 2010).

182 *DI* 11:367 (15450630TIN00); *DI* 11:576; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 33.

183 "Das kon. Maist. landt Eijslandt, der Cronen Dennemarck frey schatzlandt, das keinem kauffmann zu besigeln geburt, Es geschee dann mit kon. Mayst. sunderlicher gunst vnnd willen". *DI* 11:341 (15450320KOL01).

184 *DI* 11:340–343 (15450320KOL00, 15450320KOL01, 15450320KOL02, 15450320KOL03); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 33, 60–61.

185 *DI* 11:477 (15470104KOL00).

because they were staying in Iceland in winter. He brought them to Amsterdam, where they managed to escape custody. Angered, Christian wrote to Hamburg and Lübeck about this, requesting that the young merchants in question be punished accordingly.[186]

Hamburg and Lübeck sent a delegation to discuss the matter in Denmark, which defended the presence of the junior merchants on the island half-heartedly by stating that Mule had more or less forced them to stay in winter. He had prohibited the Icelanders from trading with them, so they had not sold their goods and had to leave them on the island with someone to guard them. This was juxtaposed with the good service that the foreign merchants provided to the Icelanders, who were saved "from dangerous famine by the Hamburg merchants"[187] by selling them food and other commodities. Furthermore, the merchants supplied the Icelanders with fishing boats, enabling them to earn income and making them less dependent on the rich landowners ("die reichen hausbunde"), who were therefore supporting the governor's actions against them (the merchants).[188] The king was not impressed by this line of reasoning, and emphasised that the winter stay had been forbidden since the *Píningsdómur* in 1490 and that the Germans were free to leave their goods on the island, where the Icelanders could safeguard them.[189] This situation was confirmed at the Althing in 1550, where the old conditions of the German trade with Iceland were reiterated, although it was also decided that Lorentz Mule should give the confiscated goods back to the Germans.[190]

The situation escalated in the same summer in which bishop Jón Arason was murdered. Hamburg merchants and sailors kidnapped and mistreated the bailiff Christian Skriver and stole a load of stockfish from traders from Copenhagen.[191] In the charges against Jón Arason, it was stated that he had promised the Hamburg merchants that he would get rid of the Danes for them.[192] Although the role of Hamburg merchants in these developments is unclear, it is not unlikely that they cooperated with bishop Jón, as both were in conflict with the Danes, who were trying to impose their control on Iceland.

186 *DI* 11:627 (15491220NYB00); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 33–34; Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 13; Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 17.
187 "von gefharlichen hungersnoten durch die Hamburgische khauffleuth". *DI* 11:644 (15500000HAM00).
188 *DI* 11:644 (15500000HAM00).
189 *DI* 11:645.
190 *DI* 11:658 (15500630TIN00).
191 Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 36.
192 *DI* 11:678, p. 817; Þorsteinsson, "Island", 186.

When the Danish king threatened to send warships to Iceland to act against the Hamburg vessels there, Hamburg had to step back, and negotiations were arranged to take place in Flensburg in March 1551. The Hamburg representatives came with a long list of grievances about the Danes. It was claimed that they were clearly disadvantaged against the Copenhagen merchants, who were allowed to stay in winter, even though they had only been sailing there for a few years and in small numbers (two ships per year), whereas Hamburg merchants had been sailing there for over 200 years in large numbers (18 ships per year). Clearly the number of years was a gross exaggeration, but they had made their point, refuting the argument put forth by councillor Andres von Barby that the Copenhagen presence was based on old privileges.[193] In the end, it was agreed that Hamburg had to pay 2,300 daler in compensation and Copenhagen had to give back the confiscated goods. Moreover, the king must have realised that the Hamburg merchants' position on the island was still too strong and that Copenhagen merchants were not yet in a position to replace them, given the fact that the situation had gotten so out of hand during the time the island was licensed to the latter. In 1552 Christian ended Copenhagen's control over Iceland after only four years, although the latter were allowed to retain the Vestmannaeyjar.[194]

3.5.3 The 1561 sulphur monopoly

After 1560 the situation changed rapidly. Had Christian III already attempted to impose greater control on the North Atlantic trade, with Frederick II's ascent to the throne in 1559 the mercantilist tendencies became firmly established. Aware that he could not establish full Danish control overnight, Frederick took a more gradual approach, though he did start to introduce limitations on the North Atlantic trade almost immediately after the change of throne. These limitations first and foremost affected Hamburg, which had the strongest position in the north and had the greatest economic power as a growing staple market for northern Europe. For Frederick, a limitation of the position of Hamburg would benefit the Danish economic and political power. Moreover, he found out that he could

193 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2: "Relation" March 1551 (15510300HAM00); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 35–36.

194 On the lease of Iceland to Copenhagen, see Þorsteinsson, "Island", 185–187; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 31–42; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 138; Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 36–37; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 37. See Section 6.1.

use the North Atlantic trade as a lever to demand loans and payments from cities, and to play them out against each other.

The early years of the 1560s saw a succession of restrictions imposed on the North Atlantic trade. The first of these was the prohibition of the sulphur trade for foreigners. As Iceland was one of the few areas in Europe with natural occurrences of sulphur, which was of high necessity in warfare as an essential ingredient of gunpowder, it is not difficult to imagine how strict royal control of the sulphur trade was a benefit. The rising tensions with Sweden, which would eventually lead to war in 1563, made greater control over the sulphur trade even more desirable. As soon as Hamburg's city council learned of Frederick's plan, a delegation was sent to the king to dissuade him from executing it, but to no avail.[195] On 19 January 1561, Frederick wrote to governor Paul Stigsen and commander Magnus Gyldenstern that merchants from Bremen, Hamburg, and Lübeck were not allowed to trade in sulphur any more.[196]

A monopoly on this trade was instead given to Stefan Loitz from Stettin and his family, with a term of twelve years and an annual fee of 3,000 Rhenish guilders.[197] The Loitz family would charter other merchants to sail for them to Iceland and bring the sulphur to Copenhagen, where the king had commanded admiral Herluf Trolle to construct a building with two mills for refining sulphur in 1562.[198] Also, the king himself sent two ships of 100 lasts to northern Iceland to collect sulphur.[199] As the refining of sulphur requires a great deal of train oil to remove impurities from the material, in 1562 Frederick also announced to his Icelandic subjects that he would buy all train oil they produced and they were no longer allowed to sell it to foreigners.[200]

Granting the sulphur monopoly to the Loitz family was a very strategic move. The family, based in Stettin and Danzig, ran one of the most important trading houses in northern Europe in the mid-sixteenth century, and had among others established a near dominance of the salt trade in the Hanseatic network through business deals and marriages. They had amassed an enormous amount of capital as well, which they invested by serving as bankers for the nobility.[201] Frederick II

195 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 40; SAH 111–1 Kämmerei, vol. 3b, pars 3 (1543–1562).

196 *DI* 13:426, 427 (15610119EMB00, 15610119EMB01).

197 RAK D11, Pakke 30 (Suppl. II, 35): monopoly of 28 June 1561 (15610628KOB00).

198 Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 194–195.

199 *DI* 15:521.

200 "all thend lyse oc traunn, ther er paa wort lannd Islannd at bekomme". *DI* 13:531; Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 196.

201 Despite the prominence of the Loitz family in their time, they have received remarkably little attention in historical research. Johannes Papritz, in *Das Stettiner Handelshaus der Loitz im Boisalzhandel des Odergebietes unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Beziehungen zum*

had a number of reasons for strengthening his ties with this family; by giving them the Icelandic sulphur monopoly, for example, he gained access to their capital, which he needed for waging war against Sweden. When war broke out in 1563, Stefan Loitz also supplied the Danish king with arms and munitions and with intelligence gathered by his widely branching family network.[202]

That said, one of the main reasons for the Loitz monopoly was to break Hamburg's dominance in Iceland, which Stefan Loitz found out soon enough after he tried to charter Hamburg ships to sail to Iceland to fetch sulphur for him in 1562. Two ships were fitted out by his Hamburg factor, and when news of this reached the king, he subsequently denied permission for one ship of 80 lasts under command of skipper Peter Klott to sail out. In addition, 40 to 50 lasts of sulphur from another ship that had returned from Iceland to Hamburg were confiscated, because the cargo had not been brought to Copenhagen. The skipper Hans Schomaker claimed that he had been forced by severe weather conditions to sail back to Hamburg instead of going to Copenhagen.[203] Whether this was true or not (bad weather was a popular argument to justify one's presence where one was not supposed to go), Stefan Loitz refused to pay the 3,000 guilders he was due, claiming that the king himself had sent two sulphur ships to Iceland as well, thereby violating the conditions set out in the monopoly contract.[204] King Frederick was not happy with this, especially after Stefan's brothers Simon, Hans (III) the Elder and nephew Hans (IV) the Younger interfered in the matter. After negotiations by Stefan's servant Marcus Heine in September 1563, the monopoly was renewed with different conditions. The king and Stefan Loitz would form a company with a term of seven years that would send two royal ships to Iceland annually, for which Stefan Loitz would supply the commodities and earn the profit. In return the Loitz family would

brandenburgischen Kurhause (Berlin, 1932) and "Das Handelshaus der Loitz zu Stettin: Danzig und Lüneburg", *Baltische Studien* NF 44 (1957): 73–94, focuses mainly on their role in the salt trade. Their involvement in the sulphur trade and their relations with the Danish court have largely been ignored. For the historiography of the Loitz family, see Heidelore Böcker, "Das Handelshaus Loitz. Urteil der Zeitgenossen -Stand der Forschung -Ergänzungen", in *Akteure und Gegner der Hanse – Zur Prosopographie der Hansezeit*, ed. Detlef Kattinger, Ralf-Gunnar Werlich, and Horst Wernicke, Hansische Studien 9 (Weimar, 1998), 203–218.

202 RAK D11, Pakke 30 (Suppl. II, 35): letters from Stefan Loitz to the Danish court, 1561–1567; Papritz, "Das Handelshaus der Loitz", 88.

203 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): letters from Hamburg to King Fredrick II, 1562, 14 April (15620414HAM00), 30 May (15620530HAM00), and 17 October (15621017HAM00).

204 RAK D11, Pakke 30 (Suppl. II, 35): letters of Stefan Loitz to the King, 1562–1563 (15621212STE00, 15630224STE00, 15630522ANN00).

loan the king 60,000 daler with a term of for three years. Moreover, the confiscated Hamburg sulphur would be returned to them.[205]

The relation between the Danish King and the Loitz family was never a happy one, though, and it is likely that the latter did not fulfil their contractual obligations for the full seven-year term. It is very likely their trade in Icelandic sulphur came to a halt when they came into conflict with the king again in 1568, after which they lost their royal support and had to pay double toll amounts for their ships with sea salt in the Sound. This was one of the major factors that led to their bankruptcy in 1572, which took with them many members of the high nobility who were indebted to them.[206]

Of course Hamburg merchants, who had been very active in the sulphur trade in the north of Iceland in the years before, were severely affected by this. Delegations were sent to the king again in 1562 and 1563. Hamburg claimed to have sent two or three ships annually to northern Iceland, where most of the sulphur was mined, and invoked the divine order of the world, according to which no country had the right to deny others the opportunity to import and export goods.[207] This appeal for mercy not surprisingly fell on deaf ears, and Hamburg merchants tried in vain to find other ways to remain active in this profitable trade.[208] In addition to sailing on the order of Stefan Loitz, Hamburg merchants probably sailed illegally to Iceland for sulphur.[209] In 1561, Claus Rode from Lübeck confessed that he had seen Hans Rolfs and Henning Struckman buy sulphur and load it on a ship in Iceland.[210] In 1563, before the start of the sailing season, Hamburg petitioned the Danish king to permit its merchants to sail to northern Iceland in order to reclaim their still-outstanding debts in sulphur.[211] The answer

205 *DI* 14:133; Ketilsson, *Kongelige Allernaadigste Forordninger*, 26–28. (15630929KOB00); RAK D11, Pakke 30 (Suppl. II, 35): complaint by Simon Loitz and Hans Loitz the Elder and Younger, 24 February 1563 (15630224STE00).

206 Papritz, "Das Handelshaus der Loitz", 83, 86–87; Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 20.

207 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3 (15610306HAM00); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 40.

208 Baasch, 79, based on a note on the *Carta Marina* from 1539 that one pound of sulphur cost 1/2 ducate, and on the sale prices in the account books of the confraternity of St Anne in Hamburg, calculates that the profit margin of the sulphur trade was 1600 percent. This was gross profit, of course, as the costs for transportation and organisation, tolls, hire for the crew, etc. had not yet been subtracted.

209 There are some mentions of illegal sulphur smuggling from the 1560s; see Mehler, "Sulphur", 199.

210 RAK D11, Pakke 26 ("Fundes i Suppl. II, 16–17"): testimony from 22 November 1561 (15611122NYB00).

211 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Supplement II, 18a): request of 16 April 1563 (15630416HAM00).

of the king to this latter request is not known, but it was unlikely that he would have given them permission to sail north an additional year, and the sulphur ban was never revoked.[212]

On the contrary, Frederick II moved to limit trade by foreigners in Iceland even more. In March 1563, he also prohibited the sale of horses, fox and bear skins, and walrus and whale teeth to foreigners before they had been offered to the Danish officials on the island.[213] This measure had probably been provoked by the sale of a "unicorn horn" to Hamburg merchant Cordt Blome in 1561, as has been discussed above.[214]

3.5.4 The licence trade in Iceland

Next to restricting the trade in certain Icelandic commodities, Frederick tried to limit the access of German merchants to certain harbours through the introduction of licences (Figure 3.5). Some preliminary attempts had already been made to bind merchants to a certain harbour, as it had been ordained in 1545 that a ship was only allowed to trade in one harbour (i.e. the harbour for which they had paid taxes).[215] From the early 1560s onwards, merchants would have to apply for a licence in order to trade in a specific harbour in Iceland. Initially, the licences were valid for an unspecified number of years, but in the last decades of the sixteenth century the term of the licences was shortened to just a few years. This would provide the merchants the security that they were the only rightful traders in a certain harbour – something that previously had been governed by tradition and custom, but which left merchants without means to act against the interference of competitors in their harbours – but also a lot of insecurity. After all, a licence could be given to someone else after it expired or at any other moment if the king decided to do so. It is unclear whether this caused more competition between different merchants and their companies, but at least from this point on conflicts produced written evidence, providing us with insight in the workings of the North Atlantic trade.

According to an agreement between Hamburg and the Danish king of 24 November 1585, licences were introduced in an agreement between both

212 See also Section 6.5.

213 Ketilsson, *Kongelige Forordninger*, 1776, 2:18–20; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 42.

214 See Section 2.5.

215 "þuiat eigi skal eitt skip hafa kaupskap meir enn j eirne höfn."; *DI* 11:367 (15450630TIN00).

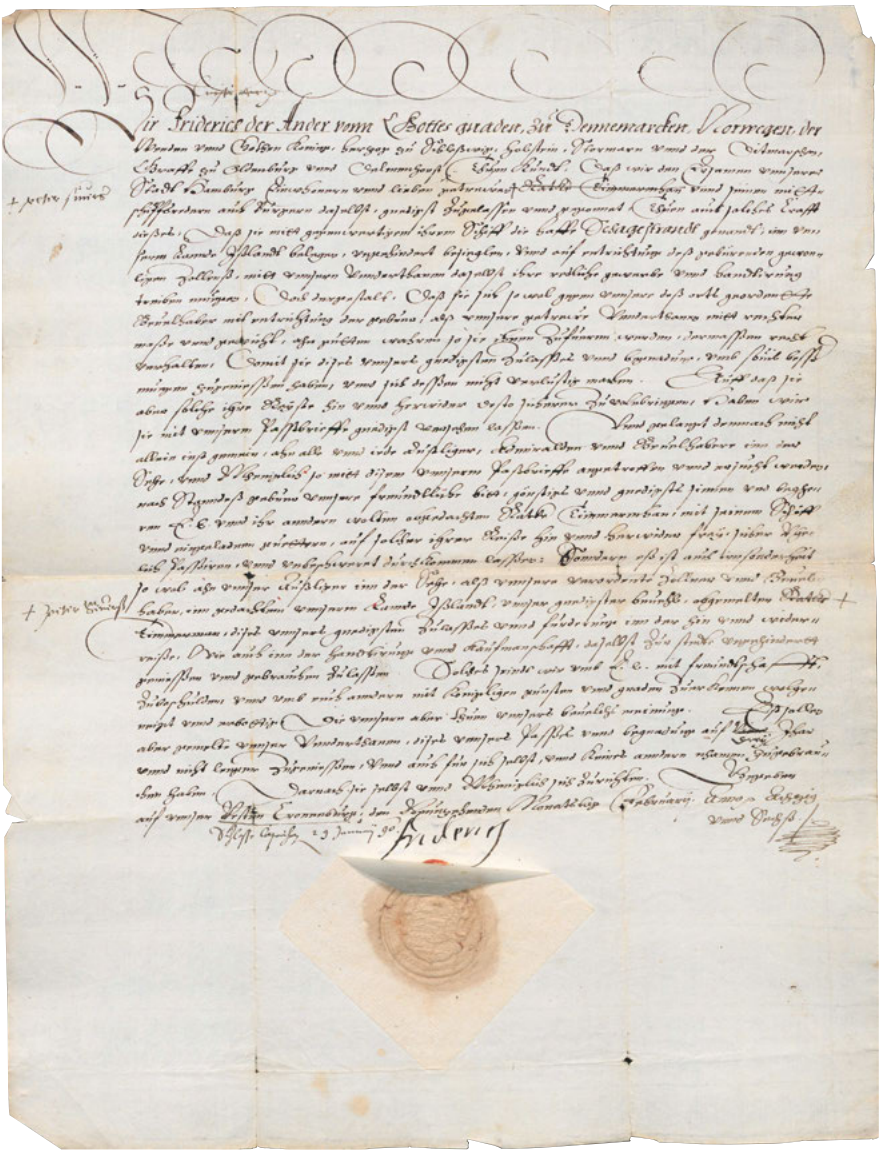

Figure 3.5: Licence from 19 February 1586 for the harbour Skagaströnd granted to Ratke Timmerman from Hamburg, which has been corrected to Peter Sivers. RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25).

parties in 1562.[216] Frederick was resorting to a tactic applied by the Danish kings against the English traders in the fifteenth century, which allowed them to profit from economic activity they could not prohibit. In the 1560s, Frederick was in dire need of money, as the Northern Seven Years' War (1563–1570) with Sweden put a heavy strain upon the royal treasury. The war was a fruitless but incredibly costly exercise on both sides, with one effect being that Denmark had to reform its system of taxation in order to be able to continue funding it.[217]

However, the first licences for Icelandic harbours are only known from 1565, and the 1562 agreement did not benefit Hamburg at all. On 5 February 1563, Frederick wrote to the Hamburg authorities that the city's merchants must refrain from sailing to the harbours of Arnarstapi, Ríf, and Grundarfjörður on the Snæfellsnes peninsula, as he had granted licences for those harbours to Danish merchants.[218] Hamburg was quite displeased, and tried everything to retain its presence on Snæfellsnes, a region with rich fishing grounds and many fishing stations. The merchants asked the queen dowager Dorothea, Frederick II's mother, to mediate on their behalf, doubtlessly because under her husband's rule, Hamburg had had much more influence.[219] However, Dorothea's appeals on behalf of the Hamburg merchants were unsuccessful, which was somewhat predictable given the poor relation with her son.[220]

In January 1565, Frederick II and the Danish Council of the Realm prohibited all Hamburg trade with Iceland, and captured Hamburg ships in order to force the city to loan them 100,000 daler. In return, Hamburg's merchants could use ten harbours in Iceland.[221] The Hamburg merchants dealing with

216 "sieder anno 62 niemand zugelaßen ohne i. kon. may. besondere begnadung und erleubnus einige hafung in Ißland zu besuchen". SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3 (15851124KOB00). This refers to an agreement between Hamburg and Frederick II on 4 May 1562 in Copenhagen, according to which Hamburg had to pay 10,000 daler; see Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 42. However, the text of this agreement only mentions the Icelandic trade when it prohibits the trade with sulphur: Commerzbibliothek, S/338 vol. 1.

217 Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721* (Edinburgh, 2000), 29–38; Wittendorff, *På Guds og herskabs nåde*, 310–311; Hauschild, "Frühe Neuzeit und Reformation," 429–33.

218 *DI* 14:49 (15630205FRE00).

219 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): Hamburg appeals for mediation to Dorothea and Dorothea's letter to Frederick II, 24 November / 5 December 1563 (15631100HAM01, 15631124HAM00, 15631205KOL00).

220 Wittendorff, *På Guds og herskabs nåde*, 218.

221 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15650000XXX00). These were Berufjörður, Básendar, Keflavík, Hafnarfjörður, Akranes, Patreksfjörður, Tálknafjörður and Bíldudalur, Dýrafjörður, Skutulsfjörður, and Álftafjörður (see Section 6 and Table 5.2).

Iceland protested that they could not pay this sum, as the Icelandic trade did not yield enough profit.[222] The delegation sent to Denmark to discuss the situation was only able to gain Frederick II's approval of Hamburg merchants sailing to Iceland that year to collect their debts, but they could not undertake new commercial activities. Moreover, they were not allowed to trade in Hofsós or in other harbours given to Danish merchants.[223] It is unknown how the king reacted to renewed requests the next winter that Hamburg merchants be permitted to sail to Iceland again,[224] but he must have softened his stance around 1566 or 1567, as the number of Hamburg ships sailing to Iceland reached normal levels again after a clear dip in 1565–6 (Figure 3.4). Actual licences for Hamburg merchants, however, had not yet been issued.

In fact, the first known licences seem to have been issued explicitly to counter Hamburg (and to a lesser extent, Bremen) dominance on the island, as they gave Danish merchants and their allies the opportunity to trade with Iceland as well.[225] One such figure is Lübeck burgomaster Bartholomeus Tinappel, who sided with Denmark in the war with Sweden and was also a commander of the fleet during the war. He sought to profit from this service in August 1565 by acquiring a licence to trade with the harbours of Ísafjörður and Dýrafjörður in northwestern Iceland, which had been used by Hamburg merchants before.[226]

The case of Tinappel also immediately demonstrated the disadvantages of the licence system, as licences were now associated with a specific person instead of being based on the division of harbours governed by custom. Tinappel died the next year in a naval battle near Visby, whereupon a new licence was immediately issued to Christof Vogler, the scribe of Segeberg castle.[227] Margaretha, Tinappel's widow, tried to continue her late husband's business there, and asserted her right to do so by emphasising his services in the war with Sweden in her appeals to the Danish court. Vogler for his part did not wish to yield his

222 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 43.

223 *DI* 14:242 (15650128FRE00); RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): request and permission to sail to Iceland to reclaim debts, March / April 1565 (15650303HAM00, 15650405LUN00); *KB* 1561–1565, p. 554.

224 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): requests from Hamburg, 12 December 1565 (15651212HAM00), 1566, 9 February (15660209HAM00), 12 February (15660212HAM00).

225 For a complete overview of licences, see Appendix A.

226 *DI* 14:289 (15650814KOB00); RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): request of Tinappel (15650811KOB00).

227 *DI* 14:407 (5670129FRE00); Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 20–21.

position in the slightest, complaining when she sent a ship in 1567 to Iceland to reclaim the outstanding debts of her deceased husband.[228]

The licences provided Frederick with a legal means for breaking the dominance of Hamburg and Bremen merchants on the island, who had divided the harbours among themselves according to decades-old custom. For example, licences were also issued to Danish noble Birge Trolle for Búðir and Kumbaravogur,[229] to Herman Oldenseel from Lübeck for Vopnafjörður in 1566,[230] and to Heinrich Mumme from Copenhagen for "Ostforde" (Berufjörður) around the same year.[231] All these harbours had formerly been in use by Bremen, which was also accused of harbouring Swedish privateers in the River Weser.[232] The city saw its presence in Iceland threatened as well, and sent ambassador Tyleman Zerneman to Copenhagen in 1567, who secured permission for Bremen merchants to remain active in these harbours.[233] Licences were issued to Hamburg citizens as well in 1566, specifically Joachim Thim for Keflavík and Joachim Wichman for Hafnarfjörður.[234] However, both were working in close cooperation with the Danish court: Wichman was Hamburg factor for the Loitz family,[235] and both appear later as Danish factors in the trade with the Faroes.[236]

It is unclear how systematically the licences were issued and how much revenue they generated for the king. In the 1560s and 1570s, when the German presence in Iceland was often contested, licences seem to have been issued in specific circumstances to restrict or grant access to specific harbours. In 1576, Bremen merchant Bernd Losekanne stated, during a dispute with his former trading partner Christoffer Meyer in Berufjörður, that they "did not have to pay rent, like the others have to do, but only the tolls".[237] Apparently, the king had

228 RAK D 11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22/23): Margaretha's request, 4 April 1567 (15670404LUB00); reaction to Vogler's complaint, 21 February 1568 (15680221LUB00). Margaretha's appeals were not entirely in vain, as she was able to continue the business of her late husband for some years in another harbour; see Sections 6.4 and 7.4.3.

229 *DI* 14:327 (15660228KOB00). See Sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.5.

230 *DI* 14:328 (15660228KOB01). See Section 6.6.1.

231 *DI* 14:356 (15660617KOB00). See Section 6.6.3.

232 *DI* 14:346 (15660524BRE00).

233 *DI* 15:13 (15670926BRE00). See Sections 6.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.5, and 6.6.3.

234 *DI* 14:329 (15660303FRE00); *DI* 14:357 (15660625KOB0).

235 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): letter from skipper Franz Friese, 6 October 1566 (15661006HAM00).

236 See Sections 3.6 and 7.2.5.

237 "nur keine pacht, gelike andere doen möten, darvan gegevenn, sünder alleine mit entrichtinge des tollens, fry gewesenn". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: final plea of Christoffer Meyer against Bernd Losekanne, 13 February 1576 (15760213BRE00); See also Section 6.6.3.

desired a payment for *some* of the licences, similarly to when he pressed Hamburg to pay for the ten harbours in 1565 but stopped trying to collect this fee once the war with Sweden ended. Prices for licences were therefore probably dependent on the situation. Only once, in 1577, is a price mentioned: Stade paid 300 Reichsthaler for the use of Ísafjörður and Álftafjörður for six years, on top of the tolls.[238]

The growing commercial power of Hamburg and its attempts to become the staple port for the lower Elbe region brought the city into more conflict with the Danish king. Frederick saw the Icelandic trade as a welcome means to put Hamburg under pressure. In 1574, the king wrote to the governor in Iceland that all Hamburg trade with the island was prohibited, the fish had to be exported to England only, and in the case that Hamburg ships appeared nevertheless, they should be captured.[239] This was part of a larger campaign: over the next few years, all Hamburg trade in Danish territories was prohibited.[240]

However, Hamburg found means to circumvent the trading ban. In 1576 and 1577, merchants from Stade and Buxtehude acquired licences for the Icelandic trade.[241] Merchants from these towns, located on the lower Elbe close to Hamburg, had never been active in the North Atlantic trade before. According to a letter of the Hamburg merchants trading with Iceland from 1577, many from their ranks had begun to operate from Copenhagen, Lübeck, Bremen, Lüneburg, Stade, Buxtehude, Kiel, and towns in Holstein. In Buxtehude, they had even bought a new ship for the purpose.[242]

However, the Stade and Buxtehude ships might not even have sailed to Iceland from those towns. As we can see from the number of ships returning from Iceland to Hamburg derived from the donation registers of the confraternity of St Anne in Hamburg (Figure 3.4), the number of ships trading with Iceland declined with over 50 percent between 1574 and 1578, but there were still about seven ships trading annually with Iceland in that period. This differs markedly from the outcome of the previous trading ban in 1564, when the number of ships dropped to almost zero, so we might conclude that many ships were simply sailing under false flag from Buxtehude and Stade, beyond the control of

238 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Supplement II, 25): list of licences for harbours in Iceland, 1576–1585 (15860000XXX01).
239 *NRR* 2:112
240 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 46.
241 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Supplement II, 25) (15860000XXX01); *KB* 1576–1579, p. 177; *NRR* 2:213.
242 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3: complaints from Hamburg merchants about the Danish trading ban, 3 June 1577 (15770603HAM00); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 46.

Denmark, but were actually leaving from and returning to Hamburg. One entry in the Hamburg donation register from 1581 states this explicitly, as Jurgen Elers is recorded as having donated money from a Buxtehude ship.[243]

This state of affairs would not last long, as it was in the interest of both Hamburg and the Danish king to restore commercial relations. Upon a treaty being concluded in Flensburg on 5 July 1579 and confirmed in Wismar the situation was back to normal. From a resolution of the king from 1585, we learn that this treaty granted Hamburg 15 licences for harbours in Iceland, where they were free to trade except in sulphur, and that they had to acknowledge the rights of Bremen, Lübeck, and Stade to trade there as well, who were using eight other harbours in total.[244]

Until the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in 1601, Hamburg merchants would enjoy two decades of relatively peaceful and free trade in Iceland, and the Hamburg North Atlantic trade experienced a considerable boom. This is suggested by the number of ships returning from the north (Figure 3.4), the continuing complaints from Bremen that they lost many of their harbours to Hamburg in the 1580s and 1590s, and the continuity of licences, most of which were reissued to the same group of merchants every few years.

Under the surface, however, the political situation had irrevocably changed. Hamburg saw the previous commercial situation restored, but the Danish king had strengthened his control over the island. One sign of this is the fact that the issued licences were issued for ever-shorter periods of time. Whereas the early licences were often issued for an unspecified time, from 1586 they were issued for a limited time, usually three or four years. The risk of losing a harbour to competitors was a real problem, made even more acute by the extensive extension of credit, which left merchants in danger of holding a great deal of debt on Iceland that they could not reclaim in case of loss of a licence. An extreme example is Bremen merchant Carsten Bake, who was granted licences for

243 "Jürgen Elers van dat Buxtehuder schip geven 1 daler". SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 271v; see also Kurt Piper, "Urkundliche Nachweise über die Buxtehuder Islandfahrt (1577–1581)", *Stader Jahrbuch* NF, 57 (1967): 145–146.

244 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3 (15851124KOB00). Transcript in Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 136–140. The harbours are not mentioned by name, but they can be determined from a list of Hamburg licences from 1586 (RAK Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) – 15860213HAM00): Arnarstapi, Ríf, Barðaströnd, Ísafjörður, Hofsós, Vopnafjörður, Hornafjörður, Eyrarbakki and Þorlákshöfn, Hafnarfjörður (with two ships), Keflavík, Básendar, Grindavík, and Skagaströnd. The eight other harbours must then be: Berufjörður, Kumbaravogur, Nesvogur, Búðir, Flatey, Grundarfjörður, Hólmur, and Straumur (see Section 6). The suggestion by Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 14, that the island was divided in spheres of influence between Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck is not confirmed by the sources.

different harbours every few years, and complained in 1593 that he still had many outstanding debts all over the island that he was not allowed to reclaim.[245]

The licence system thus created in effect a divide and rule policy, as merchants became more concerned with defending their individual interests in certain harbours than with common interests on the island. Although it can be assumed that before the introduction of licences there had been conflicts between merchants about the use of a certain harbour as well, such conflicts were likely resolved by the parties involved, and the use of a certain harbour was in large part dictated by tradition. The dispute mentioned above between Bernd Losekanne and Christoffer Meyer in 1576, who fought over the right to use the harbour Berufjörður,[246] hints at this, when Meyer stated that "although [Losekanne claimed that] the lease of harbours has been abolished, each has his own usual harbour, which he has used and sailed to since 20, 30 or more years, until the current day, without anybody's interference like before".[247] The licences, however, now provided a legal means to prevent other merchants from using a harbour, as the same document recounts that "the skipper [from Bremen] expelled a skipper from Hamburg with our mentioned royal letter [i.e. the licence] from our harbour, who immediately, as soon as he had been shown the letter, left [the harbour] to us".[248] Conflicts now often involved the Danish court, where both parties would vie for the king's favour in order to be granted the right to use a certain harbour.

From conflicts that arose later in the century, we learn that the licences were issued by the German Chancery of Denmark, a governmental department established in 1523 to handle external affairs and administer the German-speaking lands of Schleswig and Holstein. The chancery kept a register of the issued licences, as is indicated in a letter from Stade from 1578, in which royal treasurer Christoffer Valckendorf is said to have taken "a booklet from a separate

245 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): complaint of Carsten Bake, 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE01).

246 See Section 6.6.3.

247 "offt wol de pachte der havingen affgeschaffet, so hefft doch ein jede syne gewöntlike havinge, de he süßlange vor 20, 30, unnd mehr jaren gehat unnd besegelt, noch beth up den hüdigenn dach, ane jemandes hinderinge, nah wo vor, tho gebrükenn". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: final plea of Christoffer Meyer against Bernd Losekanne, 13 February 1576 (15760213BRE00).

248 "de schipper [. . .] einenn Hamborger schipper mit berordenn unsem hebbenden könninckliken breve, uth der sülvigen unser havinge gewiset, de sick ock thor stündt, alse öhme de breff getönet, dar uth gemaket, unnd uns wikenn mötenn". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: final plea of Christoffer Meyer against Bernd Losekanne, 13 February 1576 (15760213BRE00).

room, in which the fjords of Iceland were listed".[249] However, their information about the geography and local circumstances in these fjords seems to have been limited. In 1584, the king complained that he was overloaded with requests for licences for harbours in Iceland, but could not get enough information from the chancery.[250] It is likely that the German merchants, who sailed with many ships to Iceland each year, knew the country better than the chancery, which had to rely on Danish officials on Iceland for information, information that was not always accurate.

This situation led to a number of conflicts, as merchants (deliberately) acquired licences for harbours that were already being used by others. The most serious dispute involved the fjord Berufjörður in eastern Iceland in 1590–1591. Bremen merchants had held a licence for the fjord under the name "Ostforde" for decades; in 1590, the chancery allegedly made a mistake when it renewed this licence, issuing a new one for "Wapenforde", which was a different fjord (Vopnafjörður) already in use by the merchant Paul Lindeman from Hamburg. The Hamburg city council noted on the occasion that it was "not uncommon, that one harbour is confused with another".[251] Although the mistake was quickly discovered, and the Bremen merchants requested the licence to be changed, Hamburg took advantage of the resulting confusion to request a licence for the same fjord as well under the local name "Bernforde" (Berufjörður). The chancery, which obviously had no idea this was essentially the same harbour, granted the request, resulting in a dispute between Bremen and Hamburg merchants about who had the right to use the harbour. Both parties provided testimonies from locals supporting their claims, Bremen stating that "Ostforde" and "Bernforde" were essentially the same harbour, and Hamburg stating that there was no place called "Ostforde". In the end it was decided that it was impossible to prove who was right, and both licences were deemed valid.[252] Bremen merchants successfully played the same trick in 1597, when they acquired a licence for the harbour "Stickingsholm" (Stykkishólmur); Oldenburg merchants

249 "aus einem sonderlichen gemach ein buchleinn, in welchem die vorde des Ißlandes verzaichnet gewesen". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): complaint of Stade merchants about confusion of licences, 20 January 1578 (15780120STA00).

250 *KB* 1584–1588, p. 30.

251 "unnd nicht ungewönlich sein muge, daß eine have vör die andere benennet werde". RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): request for renewal of Paul Lindeman's licence for Vopnafjörður, 2 January 1590 (15900102HAM00).

252 See Section 6.6.3.

contended this was a part of the harbour Nesvogur, where they had been trading. Bremen had lost Nesvogur to Oldenburg before.[253]

3.5.5 Influence of the nobility

A second sign of the growing dominance of the Danish crown in Iceland is the influential role that the Danish nobility, German princes (especially members of the House of Oldenburg, to which the Danish king belonged) and merchants from the Danish-held territories of Schleswig and Holstein came to play in the last decades of the sixteenth century. We have already seen how Hamburg merchants appealed to the queen dowager Dorothea when they saw their interests in Iceland threatened by her son Frederick II. This proved to be a preview of a practice that would become more or less standard in the decades that followed. Requests for licences were often accompanied by letters of mediation by leading Danish nobles or members of the House of Oldenburg.

The importance of the former becomes apparent around the ascent of Christian IV to the Danish throne (1588). As Christian was only eleven years old when he succeeded to the throne, a regency council was set up that consisted of four members of the Danish Council of the Realm. Until 1596, when Christian was deemed old enough to take on royal responsibilities, the councillors' names and signatures appeared on the issued licences. In that same period, many requests for licences from German merchants were directed towards the council or they were asked for mediation.[254]

The importance of the second group, German princes, reflected the changing power relations between the German towns and the Danish king. Hoping to influence royal policy, the towns would turn to their formal overlords, with whom they often had a troubled relation. Especially significant is the role of members of the House of Oldenburg, who were related to the Danish royal family and held high-ranking positions in various German princedoms. For example, Bremen merchants and the city council solicited Duke John Adolf of Holstein-Gottorp, who became prince-archbishop of Bremen in 1585, to assist with the acquisition of licences in Iceland. As early as 1566 appeals were made to Joachim Hinck, dean of the Bremen cathedral chapter and as such representative of

253 See Section 6.3.6.

254 Wittendorff, *På Guds og herskabs nåde*, 321–328.

the archbishop, for help with regard to licences for the harbours Keflavík and Grindavík.[255]

A similar role was played by the Count of Oldenburg, who had personal connections with the Danish king. In 1579, Joachim Kolling from Hooksiel in the land of Jever, which belonged to Oldenburg, sought to acquire a licence for the harbour Kumbaravogur. Kolling had sailed in the service of Bremen merchants to Iceland before, so he was familiar with the situation there, and when licence holder Johan Munsterman, a Bremen skipper, died in a shipwreck in 1578, Kolling saw an opportunity to sail there for himself and acquired a licence through the mediation of Count John VII.[256]

At the same time, the growing influence of these nobles in the issuing of Icelandic licences came to pose a threat to the interests of German cities in Iceland, as the nobles might decide to acquire licences for themselves. The counts of Oldenburg in particular are known to have had strong interests in the North Atlantic trade: Count Anthony received permission in 1557 to sail for one year to Iceland without having to pay tolls,[257] and might have sent ships there in a couple of years. In 1563, he tried in vain to acquire a licence for the Faroes, claiming that he needed fish for the provision of his castles and fortifications.[258] Normally, the count would get this fish from Bremen, as is attested by the sale of Icelandic stockfish to him by Bremen councillor and merchant Hinrick Salomon in 1570.[259] It is therefore no surprise that when Joachim Kolling's enterprise was no success, probably because of financial difficulties, Count John VII requested a new licence for Kumbaravogur in his own name.[260]

Other princes pursued similar interests. When Bremen merchants asked Prince-Archbishop Henry III to mediate for them concerning a licence for the

255 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15); SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15660329BRE00); H. Hertzberg, "Das Tagebuch des bremischen Ratsherrn Salomon 1568–1594", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 29 (1924): 37; on Joachim Hinck, see Krause, "Hyncke, Joachim", *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 1883, accessed 17 July 2018, https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd140745114.html.

256 NLO, Best. 20, -25, no. 6 (15791211SKA00); Kohl, "Oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 37. See Sections 6.3.5 and 7.2.1.

257 *KB* 1555–1560, p. 93; *DI* 13:376.

258 Dietrich Kohl, "Überseeische Handelsunternehmungen oldenburgischer Grafen im 16. Jahrhundert", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 16 (1910): 425–427; Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 70–71.

259 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 37.

260 NLO, Best. 20, -25, no. 6: request of the Count, 13 February 1585 (15850213OLD00). See also Sections 6.3.5 and 7.2.1.

harbours Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður in 1583, they received the answer that the archbishop had not received an answer from the king yet, and advised them to wait patiently. Little did they know that Henry in the meantime was busy trying to acquire a licence for himself, and were unpleasantly surprised when Frederick II issued a licence to Henry for Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður on 3 May 1584.[261] Henry hired a skipper from Bremen, Bruning Nagel, to sail for him, who of course incurred the wrath of his fellow citizens who had been sailing to those harbours previously. The Bremen council tried to find a middle way by demanding that Nagel and the others form a trading company together.[262] The situation seemed to turn to the advantage of the city when Henry died in April 1585, and Bremen merchants requested a new licence for both harbours. However, Frederick II answered that the licence for Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður had already been issued to the Count of Oldenburg.[263]

In the previous decade, the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, Adolf, a half-brother of King Christian III, had used the prohibition against Hamburg merchants sailing to Iceland in 1573 to his advantage, fitting out a ship in Kiel to sail to Iceland for him, and asking for and receiving an exemption from the Sound Toll from the king.[264] Hamburg merchants complained jealously when he subsequently ordered a skipper from Hamburg to sail the ship for him, although they were not allowed to sail there themselves.[265] Adolf's activity in the north did not stop when Hamburg reconciled with the king, apparently continuing until his death in 1586; at least in 1585, there is still mention of his ship having visited the harbour Straumur near Hafnarfjörður.[266]

Finally, the last decades of the sixteenth century were characterised by the growing importance of merchants from towns in Holstein in the Icelandic trade. As these regions were subjects of the Danish king or his relatives, the emergence of these persons in the North Atlantic trade further testifies to the changed relations. From the 1560s onwards we encounter merchants from towns in the Danish part of northern Germany like Wilster, Rendsburg, Kiel, and Segeberg.

261 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: correspondence between Bremen, the archbishop, and King Frederick II, June 1583–April 1584 (15830612BRV00; 15830927BRE00; 15831024DRI00; 15840422BRV00; 15840503SKA00, 15840503SKA01).

262 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: declaration of Henry III, 10 August 1584 (15840810BRV00); decision of the city council, 3 February 1585 (15850203BRE00). See also Section 7.2.1.

263 SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15851120BRE00; 15851217KRO00).

264 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 10) (15730625GOT00).

265 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): complaints of April 1573 (15730419HAM00, 15730420HAM00).

266 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 7): list of Icelandic harbours, 1584–1592 (15840000KOB00). See Section 6.2.5.

For example, three citizens from the town of Wilster in the Elbe marshes downstream of Hamburg received a licence for Básendar and Þórshöfn in 1584, although it is unclear if they used it.[267] By favouring his citizens in this area (which belonged to the royal part of Holstein), Frederick II might have been pursuing a strategy that would be taken up by his successor Christian IV in founding the city of Glückstadt a few decades later (see next section).

Furthermore, the king apparently rewarded persons in his service with a licence for a harbour in Iceland. An early example is the enfeoffment of Thomas Koppen, former secretary of Frederick I, with the Faroes in 1529.[268] We have already noted that Bartholomeus Tinappel, admiral in the Danish navy, and Christof Vogler, scribe of Segeberg castle, received licences for Ísafjörður in 1565 and 1567, respectively. Around 1596, Rotman Pöner received a licence for the harbours Straumur and Vatnsleysa through the connections of his father, who was the royal toll collector in Rendsburg. Although Rotman himself may have been a merchant in Hamburg, and certainly worked with other merchants in the city who were trading with Iceland, it was his father's position in Rendsburg that was instrumental in his acquisition of the licence.[269]

Other merchants from Schleswig and Holstein met with less success: Flensburg merchant Claus Jacobsen requested various licences around 1590, but no actual licence in his name exists and there is no evidence of him having actually been to Iceland. Also, the town of Oldesloe tried, unsuccessfully, to acquire a licence for Michael Barchstede.[270]

The importance of cooperating with merchants who had connections to the Danish court was expressed explicitly by Bremen merchants in 1580. In a complaint about the loss of the licence for Kumbaravogur to Oldenburg merchant Joachim Kolling, the widow of Johan Munsterman, who had held the previous licence before his death, stated that "to further the matter, [we] have included one of our [fellow] citizens, with the name Heinrich Rulves, the son of Rulf von Deventer, the master of artillery of the royal majesty of Denmark, in our company, and therefore [we] hope to heighten our chances at the royal majesty's court, as he is tempted to privilege his own subjects before foreigners".[271]

267 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25): list of licensed harbours, 1576–1585 (15860000XXX01).
268 See Section 3.6.
269 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9): letter of Niels Busk to Fritz Pöner, 14 January 1596 (15960114AAR00).
270 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 11): letters from Oldesloe, 1600 (16000102OLD00; 16000103OLD00)
271 "zu mehrer befurderung der sachenn einenn unser burger mit nahmen Heinrich Rulves, der kon. matt. zu Dennemarckenn zeuchmeisters, Rullf von Deventers sohn, mitt, unnd neben

3.5.6 The Danish trade monopoly in 1602

Christian IV, who had inherited the Danish throne in 1588, became known for his implementation of a successful mercantilist economic policy during his long reign, which made Denmark an important player in Europe. With regards to the North Atlantic trade, he intensified the effort, initiated by his predecessors, to exercise control over that trade. On 24 July 1601 he sent a decree to the cities involved in the Icelandic trade, which informed them that he had given the right to trade with Iceland to his citizens in Copenhagen, Helsingør, and Malmö, and all foreigners were prohibited from trading there from now on.[272] This introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in Iceland was part of a larger campaign to reduce Hanseatic influence in the Danish realm. For example, in Scania German elements had been removed from the churches in 1600, such as windows, pews, and German tombstones.[273]

The German merchants, therefore, must have seen the ban coming, but were hoping that it would be a temporary measure like earlier trading bans. Hamburg merchants complained bitterly about the king's decision, particularly on the grounds that they were not able to reclaim their outstanding debts.[274] Multiple times during the seventeenth century they requested permission to sail to Iceland again, but their requests were always denied. Moreover, having a relationship with the king no longer guaranteed a licence. The Count of Oldenburg's requests for renewal of the Icelandic trade, which coincided with those of Hamburg, were similarly denied in 1603 (when the last licences ended), 1611 (when rumours had apparently spread that the king was about to open Iceland to foreigners again), and 1645 (after Christian IV had granted him exemptions to tolls in the Sound and Norway).[275] In Bremen, we know only about objections directly after the prohibition was declared: probably they chose to focus on Shetland, where they had built up a strong position in the course of the sixteenth century.

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uns in unsere geselschafft verstattet, und dahero desto mehr befurderungh an der kon. matt. hoff, alß die derselben underthanenn vor frombden zu befurderen geneigtt, unns undterthenigst vertrostenn". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 1 December 1580 (15801201BRE00).

272 Only the letters sent to Oldenburg (NLO, Best. 20, -25, no. 6 – 16010724KOB00) and Bremen (SAB 2-R.11.ff. – 16010724KOB01) have survived.

273 AHL Schonenfahrer, nos. 1160, 1166.

274 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19); SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: Hamburg complaints, 29 October 1601 (16011029HAM00).

275 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 51–54. NLO Best. 20, -25, no. 6: 1603 requests for a licence for Ólafsvík (16030200OLD00, 16030200OLD01, 16030310FAL00); 1611 requests (16110207OLD00, 16110307KOB00); 1645 request (16450000OLD00).

In 1601, a large number (thirteen) of issued Icelandic licences expired, making it easier to get rid of the Germans there as quickly as possible.[276] Another eleven licences were still valid for one or two years,[277] and although Christian IV theoretically guaranteed the validity of these licences, and spurred the Germans to reclaim their outstanding debts, there are numerous signs that he was reluctant to honour these commitments. For example, merchants in the harbour Hvalfjörður, who lost their licence during a shipwreck in 1601, were not given a copy of their (still-valid) licence, but only a letter in which the king stated that they were permitted to transport their goods on the ship of the merchants in Hafnarfjörður. Though the latter refused to do so, on the grounds that they did not even have enough space on board for their own goods, the king did not grant the former Hvalfjörður merchants a year's extension.[278] Also, it seems that the locals were instructed to avoid trading with the Germans. Hamburg merchants in Iceland wrote in 1602 that they had heard from governor Ewalt Kruse that "he had a letter from the king in his possession, in which all Icelanders were forbidden to pay their debts to the Germans, and not to sell them anything, but only to the Danes, until they had enough, and that this order was announced to the people by the preachers in each parish".[279] In the meantime, Danish merchants were complaining about the interference of German merchants in certain harbours, even though they still had valid licences.[280]

The German merchants in Iceland therefore had a hard time getting their debts repaid and transporting all of their stockfish and other commodities back home, as the many disputes between merchants with Iceland from Hamburg bear out. Typically, merchants tried to pay for space on the ships of fellow merchants who still had valid licenses for harbours (predominantly Hafnarfjörður) in order to bring their goods back to Hamburg.[281] To make matters worse, 1602

276 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 50.

277 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8): 1601 list of licensed harbours (16010000XXX00).

278 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16030305HAM00).

279 "ehr von kon. maytt. unserm gnedigsten hern ein schreiben in henden hette, darinne allen Ißlandern wurde verbotten, das sie keinen Teutschen ihre schulde bezahlen, auch denselben nicht vorkauffen, besondern alleine mit den Dennemarckern handlen solten, biß dieselben berivet weren, inmassen dan sothan koniglich befelh durch die prediger daselbsten den cirspiel leuten were angekundiget worden". RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16020913HAM00).

280 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): complaints of Copenhagen merchants about interference in Básendar, August 1602 (16020800KOB00).

281 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: controversy about the hire of shipping space between Keflavík and Hafnarfjörður merchants from Hamburg, 1602–1604 (16021126HAM00; 16030400HAM00; 16030505HAM00; 16040111HAM00; 16040123HAM00).

was a particularly bad year in terms of weather: the winter was particularly cold, causing many animals to die and as a consequence the Icelanders were suffering from famine. Fish catches had been bad, and in the summer there was still so much sea ice that harbours in the North could not be reached.[282] As a result it must have been impossible for German merchants to reclaim many of their still-outstanding debts on the island, and they must have suffered great losses.

Contrary to the hopes of merchants from the German cities, Christian's decision was definitive, and the resulting Danish trade monopoly in Iceland was to last well into the nineteenth century. In 1614, he renewed the monopoly for the Danish cities, and in 1619 the Copenhagen Icelandic company was founded, which was to be the only company to trade with Iceland, thereby cutting Helsingør and Malmö out of this trade altogether.[283] One of the reasons behind this was that the initial Danish trade monopoly had left too many back doors open for German merchants to remain in the Icelandic trade. In 1602, for example, we hear about a ship from Helsingør that was led by a merchant and a helmsman from Hamburg.[284] Though the king had stated in 1602 that he wanted to give his own subjects the chance to trade in Iceland as well, the reality was that the Danish merchants were still dependent on their German peers, because the latter possessed often lifelong experience of the sailing routes and conditions on the island.[285] Indeed, the data from the donation register of the Hamburg confraternity shows donations from up to seven ships annually until 1627 (Figure 3.4), many of which are indicated to have sailed for Danish merchants.

Moreover, Hamburg's city council, well aware of its citizens' experience in the North Atlantic trade, tried to retain the position of the city as staple port for Icelandic produce. Article 29 of the town law of Hamburg from 1603 explicitly prohibited citizens who traded with Iceland to sail from other cities under penalty of expulsion.[286] The strong Hamburg market for Icelandic commodities also attracted Danish ships to the city: the Hamburg *Schifferbücher* frequently record the arrival of 10 to 20 ships from Iceland annually until *c*. 1620, which does not square with the data from the account book of the Hamburg confraternity, so these must largely have been Danish ships.[287] In 1619, the king inserted a clause into the monopoly charter for the Copenhagen Icelandic company stating that

282 See Section 4.1.2.

283 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 51; Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 51; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 98–103; Gunnarsson, *Monopoly Trade*, 54–55.

284 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): witness accounts, 30 August 1602 (16020830HAM00).

285 See Sections 4.1.2 and 6.2.3.

286 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 52; Bartels, *Grundgesetze*, 228.

287 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 48.

Danish merchants must bring at least half of the Icelandic commodities to Copenhagen.[288] The numbers of ships in the Hamburg donation register do indeed decline after this time, although Lübeck merchants might have taken over for a while: between 1619 and 1637, the Sound Toll registers recorded one or two ships yearly from Iceland to Lübeck.[289]

Among other consequences, the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly spurred illegal activity in the North Atlantic. The Germans, along with the English (who had retained their commercial presence in Iceland during the sixteenth century, mainly fishing, but also sometimes trading) and the Dutch took part in this. In 1616, Christian prohibited smuggling of commodities from Iceland by all foreigners, and later sent warships to patrol the waters around the islands.[290]

Now the Germans had been largely removed from the North Atlantic trade, the king faced another problem: the Copenhagen merchants returning from the North Atlantic often made for Hamburg instead of Copenhagen, because of the large and well-established market there with strong connections to central and southern Europe. In order to undercut the dominant economic position of Hamburg in northern Germany, the king founded Glückstadt, on the Elbe downstream of Hamburg, to compete with the latter. The town was made staple port for Icelandic produce, and the Copenhagen Icelandic Company was allowed to set up scales for Icelandic commodities in the town in 1623. However, it proved to be impossible to circumvent Hamburg altogether: the continuing attractiveness of the established market nearby spurred the king to take additional steps to guarantee the position of Glückstadt as the Icelandic staple market. Icelandic commodities had to be offered for sale in Glückstadt, but as many of them were sold in Hamburg in the long run, Christian ordered in 1645 that all commodities had to be stored in Glückstadt first and sold there as well. In response, commodities were sold directly on to Hamburg merchants and ended up on the Hamburg market again. Thereupon it was ordained in 1662 that commodities could only be transported further on Glückstadt ships, and in 1708 it was proclaimed that they must be stored in Glückstadt for at least eight days.[291]

288 Thomas, *IJslandsvaarders*, 18.

289 Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 25; Nina Ellinger Bang, ed., *Tabeller over Skibsfart og Varetransport gennem Øresund 1497–1660. udarbejdede efter de bevarede Regnskaber over Øresundstolden 1 1* (Copenhagen, 1906).

290 Ketilsson, *Kongelige Forordninger*, 1776, 2:362–364.

291 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 55–56. RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): letters of Danish kings to the governors of Glückstadt, seventeenth century.

3.6 Hamburg and the Faroe Islands

Thanks to an ample number of sources, much is known about the history of German trade in Iceland. For the Faroe Islands, on the other hand, there is a source deficit. Moreover, many statements have been made in the past with regard to the influence of the Germans in the Faroes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, that often seem to be based more on wishful thinking than a critical assessment of the few primary sources that we do have. As we have seen, there is some evidence of activity of Danzig merchants in the Faroes in 1486, but other than that, the Faroes are only ever mentioned in combination with other *skattlands*, so it is difficult to assess whether this means merchants actually sailed there. There is a clear increase of German commercial influence from the late fourteenth century onwards, with the appointment of German bishops in the Faroes, the construction of a church of St Brendan in the 1420s (a cult that presumably spread to Scandinavia from the North Sea area), and the adoption of the Hamburg ell and the *gylden* in the system of measurements in the fifteenth century.[292] However, this points more at a growing German influence in Bergen than at direct trade with Germany.[293] A permission for Hanseatic merchants to trade with the Faroes in 1361, which some scholars mention,[294] is probably a faulty interpretation of a charter from 18 June that year, in which Bergen merchants receive permission to trade with the *skattlands*. However, the charter explicitly speaks of *domestic* (i.e. Norwegian) merchants in Bergen.[295]

The Faroes therefore seem to have remained much more closely linked to Bergen than Iceland and Shetland.[296] It is possible that the lesser commercial importance of the Faroes in comparison with the other North Atlantic islands, combined with the tolerant attitude of the Danish kings towards trade with Iceland and the transfer of Shetland to Scotland after 1469, made violating the Bergen privileges to trade with the Faroes unappealing to Hanseatic merchants.

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292 Mortensen, "Økonomisk udvikling", 98–106; Símun V. Arge and Natascha Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home. Hanseatic Trade with the Faroe Islands", in *Across the North Sea. Later Historical Archaeology in Britain and Denmark, c. 1500–2000 AD*, ed. Henrik Harnow et al. (Odense, 2012), 175–78.

293 Cf. Mortensen, "Økonomisk udvikling", 106.

294 Joensen, "Fishing", 312; Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar*, 8; G. V. C. Young, *From the Vikings to the Reformation. A Chronicle of the Faroe Islands up to 1538* (Douglas, 1979), 95.

295 "inlenskir kaupmen j Biorghvin". R. Keyser et al., eds., *Norges gamle love indtil 1387.*, vol. 3 (Christiania, 1846), 181–182.

296 Andras Mortensen et al., "Opdagelse af landene i Vestnorden", in *Naboer i Nordatlanten. Færøerne, Island og Grønland. Hovedlinger i Vestnordens historie gennem 1000 år*, ed. Jón Th. Thor et al. (Tórshavn, 2012), 101.

This also meant that the Faroes remained under tighter Danish-Norwegian control, and can be considered a kind of experimental region for mercantilist measures that were introduced to the Faroes decades before they appear in Iceland, such as licences and the importance of Danish factors in the trade.

The first references to such measures date from the 1520s, a chaotic time for the Faroes that reflected the political situation in Denmark. A document from 1524 or 1525 from Cornelius Double, secretary of the exiled King Christian II, describes the attempts to arrest the Hamburg merchant Joachim Wullenwever in the Dutch harbour of Veere.[297] According to this document, Wullenwever was given the Faroes as a fief in or before 1520, which gave him the sole right to trade there and to collect taxes for the king. Wullenwever is in fact the first person known to have received this position. This started a tradition of monopolies for the islands, which continued until 1709;[298] the monopoly was given to one or several persons at a time in return for tax collection. It is unsure how and why Wullenwever was given this monopoly, but it is possible that he had been active in the north, e.g. in the Bergen trade, and was being rewarded for his (financial) support of the king, who was involved in an unsuccessful war with Sweden in an attempt to keep the country in the Kalmar Union.[299]

After Wullenwever's fief expired, he was given the right to trade there for one more year (1521) to attend to unfinished business and reclaim his outstanding debts, but he misused this permission. He was accused of having appropriated goods from the new governor Niclas Priester, goods that had previously been confiscated from a woman who was accused of having murdered her child, and who had had an affair with Wullenwever. As it happened, Wullenwever surprised Niclas in his own house, severely injured him and drove him out of the country. Moreover, he was accused of having illegally sold his wrecked ship to the bishop, although according to a 1521 law it should belong to the king.[300]

The letter of Double continues that in 1524, Christian II appointed Frederyck de Vriese as new governor of the Faroes,[301] the inhabitants of which had not yet

297 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 15; *Samlinger*, 365–375.

298 Debes, *Føroya søga*, 2:163; Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home", 178; Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar undir fríum handli*, 192. See Appendix B.

299 Johann Martin Lappenberg, "Joachim Wullenwever, Hamburgischer Oberalte und Rathsherr", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 3 (1851): 112.

300 Lappenberg, 113; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 162–163.

301 It is unclear what happened in the years in between. In a letter of 22 April 1524, Jørgen Hanssøn, who had been governor of Bergen under Christian II and also moved to the Netherlands following Christian's downfall, complained to the former king that under the current conditions, it was impossible to make use of his enfeoffment with the Faroes: "jeg tacker ether nåde ydmygelighen fore Feriø som ether nade meg wnt oc forlent haffuer end dog ieg nw

sworn allegiance to the new king. As the king was already exiled in Holland by this time, this Frederyck was probably a Dutchman or Frisian, which is also suggested by his name.[302] Frederyck tried to confiscate Wullenwever's wrecked ship in the king's name, but Wullenwever made use of the chaotic situation to prevent this. He sailed illegally to the Faroes, kidnapped de Vriese, and appropriated the taxes due the king. It is, however, unclear what his real motives were, as we only know one side of the story: he might have had a rightful claim to some of the tax revenue.[303]

The new king Frederick I granted the monopoly for the Faroes in November 1524 or 1525 to Peder Fresenberg.[304] Zachariasen assumes that Fresenberg was from Hamburg as well, which was met with much antipathy from Bergen: governor Vincent Lunge responded by trying to bring the Faroes back under Bergen control. In 1526, he sent a ship and soldiers to the Faroes "to free the land again [from Hamburg] for the Norwegian crown".[305] It is not known what the result of this undertaking was, but attempts to bring the Faroes back under Bergen control were unsuccessful in the long run. In February 1529, the new Bergen governor Eski Bilde received the Faroes as a fief, but in November the same year, another Hamburg merchant, Thomas Koppen, was granted the monopoly for the sum of 100 Lübeck mark annually.[306] Koppen had been King Frederick's secretary when he was still only Count of Holstein and had served him during negotiations with Christian II in 1522; he exploited his good standing with the king to become monopolist in the Faroes.[307]

Not much later, we hear about Joachim Wullenwever in the Faroes again. Koppen and Wullenwever were leading figures in Hamburg at that time: both are known to have been *Oberalte* (members of the governing councils of the parish churches) in the city. Wullenwever played an active role in the introduction of the Reformation in Hamburg around 1529 and became a member of the

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effter thenne leligheidt ingen profiit kand haffue ther aff meg hobes dogh met gudz hielp thet skall icke lenge ware" (Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 12.; *DN* 6:691). See Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar undir fríum handli*, 9, 190; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 164; for Hanssøn, see Halvard Bjørkvik, "Jørgen Hanssøn", *Norsk biografisk leksikon*, 2005 1999, accessed 21 June 2018, https://nbl.snl.no/Jørgen_Hanssøn.

302 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 163.

303 Lappenberg, "Joachim Wullenwever", 113–115.

304 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 16.

305 Debes, *Føroya søga*, 2:16; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 164.

306 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 165, 183. The sum of 100 Lübeck mark is first mentioned in 1532: Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 35.

307 Anton Degn, *Nøkur gomul, áður óprentað brøv o. a. Føroyum viðvíkjandi* (Tórshavn, 1939), 13–14.

city council in the 1530s; and Koppen started a foundation for retired priests and their widows through his will in 1547. They must have known each other well. In December 1531 the Danish king testified that Koppen and Wullenwever had appeared before him two years earlier (i.e. from the beginning of Koppen's monopoly) and shared the monopoly, with Wullenwever apparently managing the practical side of business.[308] This led to protests by the archbishop of Trondheim, in response to which the burgomaster of Hamburg defended the position of his fellow citizens before the Hanseatic Diet in 1533.[309] The involvement of Koppen and Wullenwever in the Reformation in Hamburg and the resistance of the Norwegian church against their presence in the Faroes leads Zachariasen to believe that they were the driving force behind the introduction of the Reformation in the Faroes.[310] This is not impossible, but hard to prove due to the absence of sources.

The Count's Feud in 1533–1534 posed challenges to Wullenwever and Koppen's position in the Faroes. The Norwegian nobility saw the death of King Frederick I and the resulting absence of a king as an opening for bringing the Faroes back under Bergen control. Claiming that with the death of the king the monopoly of Koppen and Wullenwever had lost its validity, Bishop Amund of the Faroes complained about the presence of the Hamburg merchants and sent a ship to Bergen himself with *wadmal*, feathers, and other commodities on board, with the support of Bergen governor Eski Bilde. Koppen responded by soliciting written support from members of the Danish Council of the Realm and kept his monopoly.[311] Moreover, the Norwegian Council of the Realm was abolished in 1536, which removed the main opponents of the position of the Hamburg citizens in the Faroes.

For Wullenwever, however, things changed for the worse. The Hamburg city council supported Lübeck's involvement in the Danish civil war, albeit reluctantly. Joachim Wullenwever had a large hand in this, as his brother Jurgen, burgomaster of Lübeck, had been the driving force behind that involvement.[312] The poor outcome of the war for Lübeck led to Jurgen Wullenwever's subsequent fall from power, arrest, trial and eventually execution, with negative consequences for Joachim as well. He lost his position in Hamburg's city council in 1536, and in the same year the Hamburg chronicle records Koppen and

308 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 30; *HR* IV, 1, no. 173, p. 154n4; Lappenberg, "Joachim Wullenwever", 129–130; Degn, *Nøkur gomul, áður óprentað brøv*, 13.

309 *HR* IV, 1, no. 173; Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Politik des Hansetags", 202.

310 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 165.

311 On this episode in greater detail, see Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 168–175.

312 Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 425–426.

Wullenwever as having had a falling-out.[313] In 1535, Joen Nielsen is mentioned as lawman and governor of the Faroes under Thomas Koppen.[314] Although the trade between Denmark-Norway and the Faroes was allowed again in 1547,[315] Koppen remained the only foreign merchant with permission to trade there until his death in 1553. Afterwards, the monopoly trade was lifted and the Bergen staple regained control over the Faroes,[316] although Koppen's widow Elisabeth received permission to trade there one more year to collect her deceased husband's outstanding debts.[317] Curiously, it appears she might have given this task to Wullenwever, who is listed on the ships to the Faroes in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne in 1554.[318]

The monopoly was introduced again by the king in 1557, with the argument that Thomas Koppen had allowed the Faroese to trade with foreign (i.e. German) merchants.[319] The timing of this measure is curious, three years after Koppen's death, and after he had held the monopoly for 23 years. The real reason is more likely that the Faroese had been trading with Hamburg merchants *after* Koppen's death as well, as is suggested by the Hamburg donation register, which lists ships sailing to the Faroes until 1557, thereby violating the Bergen staple.[320] The royal monopoly was now granted to various merchants from Copenhagen.[321] However, the Faroese people were apparently quite unhappy with how these merchants conducted the trade. Their primary need in terms of imports was timber for the construction of houses and ships, and as early as 1559, Frederick II

313 Lappenberg, "Joachim Wullenwever", 129.

314 Debes, *Føroya søga*, 2:61; Degn, *Nøkur gomul, áður óprentað brøv*, 19. See Section 4.4.2.

315 Evensen, *Føroyar*, 182–183.

316 *NRR* I, 162; Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, nos. 75–77, 78; Debes, *Føroya søga*, 2:61; Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar undir fríum handli*, 190.

317 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 60; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 184; Kohl, "Überseeische Handelsunternehmungen", 427n1.

318 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 130v. This suggests that Wullenwever had not yet been banished from Hamburg; he would die in exile in Malmö in 1558 (cf. Lappenberg, "Joachim Wullenwever", 130.)

319 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, nos. 83–84; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 184.

320 Kurt Piper, *Verzeichnis der Hamburger Färoerfahrer 1543–1593*, 1988, lists, based on the donation register, ships to the Faroes in 1560 and 1561 as well, but this is only based on the fact that merchant Hans Swake was on board, who is recorded as having been on ships to the Faroes until 1557. It is more likely that the 1560 and 1561 ships sailed to Shetland, where Swake is also attested in 1562. This is corroborated by his absence from the donation register in 1558 and 1559 as well.

321 1556: Mikkel Skriver, 1559: Andres Jude, 1569: Andres Jude and Matz Lampe. See Appendix B. For this period see Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 184–187.

ordered councillor Christoffer Valckendorf to sail from Bergen to the Faroes with timber.[322] In 1570, the Faroese complained again that the Copenhagen merchants were not supplying them with enough commodities (especially timber),[323] in response to which Frederick II abolished the trade monopoly again the next year.[324] He also granted the Faroese permission to keep a ship of 24 lasts to fetch timber from Norway.[325]

In this period, Hamburg merchants appear on the scene again, but exclusively in the role of royal Danish factors who cooperate with Danish and Norwegian merchants. Joachim Thim, factor of the Danish king in Hamburg, received the right to trade with the Faroes in 1573.[326] This does not mean that the monopoly was reinstated, however. Contrary to the monopolies of Thomas Koppen and the Danes, Thim's licence grants him the right to trade in the Faroes, but does not require him to collect taxes for the Danish king. Moreover, it states explicitly that inhabitants are not obliged to trade with him. Curiously, this arrangement falls right in the period in which the Danish king prohibited Hamburg merchants from sailing to many, and eventually all, Icelandic harbours and other places in the Danish realm.

Possibly Thim did not use his licence in the beginning, or chartered ships from Denmark to sail for him, as the account books of St Anne confraternity do not list him in the Faroes until 1584.[327] The latter option seems plausible, as he was granted the monopoly in autumn of 1581, in partnership with Magnus Heinesen, a Bergen privateer, seafarer, and merchant who was born in the Faroes and had received the monopoly in 1579,[328] and Jørgen Kydt from Copenhagen.[329] Earlier in 1581 Heinesen had complained about a merchant from Hamburg who had come to the Faroes the year before and had bought all the available merchandise. Heinesen captured the ship and took it to Bergen, where his goods were confiscated.[330] The Hamburg merchant apparently found some sympathy with the

322 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 90.

323 *KB* 1566–1570, pp. 316, 477–478.

324 Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar undir fríum handli*, 9, 190.

325 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 128.

326 Evensen, no. 138.

327 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00); Piper, *Verzeichnis der Färoerfahrer*, 35–36.

328 *KB* 1576–1579, pp. 558–559; Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 145. Magnus Heinesen was born around 1545 on the island of Eysturoy, where his Norwegian father was priest. After moving to Bergen in 1566, he sailed regularly between Bergen and Norway and subsequently served in the Dutch navy before returning to the Faroes in 1579. Troels Lund, "Heinesen, Mogens", *Dansk Biografisk Lexikon* (Copenhagen, 1905 1887); see also Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 118–124.

329 Evensen, *Savn*, nos. 165, 166; Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar*, 10.

330 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, nos. 157, 159.

Faroese, as Heinesen had not been able to meet their needs and arrived too late in the Faroes.[331] The identity of this Hamburg merchant is unknown, but it could have been Thim, who was ordered to cooperate with Heinesen and Kydt the year after. The reason for inclusion of Kydt in the company was that one ship was to sail to Copenhagen to return the king's tax revenue.

The cooperation between the three merchants was not successful, as Magnus Heinesen was prosecuted by Christoffer Valckendorf and fled to Holland in 1584, which also led to troubles for Thim.[332] Curiously, 1584 is the only year in which Thim is recorded in the donation register as having been in the Faroes.[333] In 1586, a new monopoly was granted to Joachim Wichman, the new Danish factor in Hamburg, and councillor Oluf Matzen of Copenhagen for ten years.[334] Joachim Wichman did avail himself of the opportunity to trade, as a ship sailed each year to the Faroes from Hamburg from 1586 onwards, but the arrangement did not last for the indicated ten years either. Oluf Matzen allegedly illegally sold his right to the monopoly on to someone else, and Wichman ended his involvement in the Faroese trade in 1591, sending a last ship there in 1592 to collect his debts on the island, after which the monopoly was returned to merchants from Copenhagen.[335] Wichman died in 1592, possibly from disease, which might also have been the reason he ceased trading with the Faroes. On the other hand, he still had many debts at the Danish court, which the king reduced to 1000 daler, because Wichman had always served him well and had encountered many difficulties in the Faroes.[336] Among them might be a possible shipwreck on his last voyage. After 1591 he is not specifically mentioned in

331 Evensen, no. 160.

332 Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar undir fríum handli*, 10. Magnus Heinesen was ultimately executed in Copenhagen in 1589, convicted of piracy against the English. Lund, "Heinesen, Mogens", 275.

333 This might have had something to do with a letter of King Frederick II to Christoffer Valckendorf of 11 April 1584, in which the former requests the cancellation of the monopoly for Thim be reconsidered, because it was not Thim's fault: Evensen, no. 177 after RAK Danske Kancelli, Sjællandske Tegnelser XV, ff. 331v–332r. Interestingly, the text of the document suggests that Heinesen (who is not mentioned by name) was Thim's brother-in-law: "icke for hans forseellße forßommelße eller muttwillige handeling men en deell formedellst, en hans swogers forßommellße".

334 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, nos. 187, 204.

335 *KB* 1588–1592, pp. 452, 686, 774; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 290–291.

336 *KB* 1588–1592, p. 822.

the donation register of St Anne's confraternity again.[337] With Wichman's death, Hamburg presence in the Faroes ended as well.[338]

3.7 Scottish rule in Shetland after 1469

Since Orkney and Shetland were pawned to Scotland by the Danish king in 1469, they followed a separate development from the other Norwegian tributary lands. However, the transfer of political power initially did not change the situation on the islands much. The earls of Orkney, to which both archipelagos belonged, had been of Scottish descent since the thirteenth century, and especially in Orkney Scottish connections were strong.[339] Shetland, however, remained linked culturally[340] and commercially to Norway after 1469 and the Norse system of government was initially kept intact. In practice, the sheriffs (called fouds) on Shetland governed the islands, which included regulating foreign trade.[341] In marked contrast with Iceland and the Faroes, the Scottish Crown did not interfere in the German trade at all until the middle of the seventeenth century.

The absence of royal intervention also makes it difficult to assess the political-economic situation on the islands before the seventeenth century, as it resulted in a lack of sources. No trade regulations for the Shetland trade were enacted in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and there was no ban on the winter stay. Even though merchants stayed in winter from time to time, this was uncommon, as the fishing in Shetland mainly took place in the summer and there was therefore little reason to stay during winter.[342] Moreover, licences for the use of certain harbours were issued by the foud, not by the king, and do not seem to have been issued systematically.[343] Maybe because of the lack of a licence system, we know very little about disputes between merchants from different countries or cities.[344]

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337 "Anno 1592 de entfanginge [. . .] van selige Jochim Wichmans 3 schepen up Feroe". Piper, *Verzeichnis der Färoerfahrer*, 37–45. No. 54. Wichman (without the addition "selige") had donated to the confraternity the year before.

338 For the Danish monopoly holders from 1591 onwards, see Joensen, Mortensen, and Petersen, *Føroyar undir fríum handli*, 10–11; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 219–237; and Appendix B.

339 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 8.

340 Norn, the Shetland dialect of Old Norse, was still spoken on the islands well into the eighteenth century.

341 *SD 1195–1579*, pp. 306–308; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 15.

342 Smith, 15. See Section 2.1.2.

343 Smith, 15–16. See Section 5.2.

344 Smith, 36 (timeline), 39, mentions in passing attacks by Shetlanders on German merchants and attempts by the foud to prohibit foreign trade in 1521. However, he gives no source

Merchants from Bremen are the first Germans to be mentioned as having established frequent direct connections with Shetland. A letter from the Bergen *Kontor* to the Hanseatic Diet in 1498 noted that Bremen merchant Hinrick Kummertho was sailing to Shetland every year.[345] Even though the explicit ban of the Shetland trade remained in place, it is likely the pawning of Shetland to Scotland meant that the consequences of violating the ban were less dire than before, encouraging Bremen merchants to take the calculated risk of ignoring the Bergen privileges. While Bremen merchants were dominant in Shetland until the seventeenth century, they were joined by merchants from Hamburg, the first of which can be traced to 1547, and also occasionally by merchants from other towns.[346] There is no evidence for Friedland's contention that the appearance of Hamburg merchants on Shetland was related to the end of Koppen's monopoly on the Faroes in 1553.[347] After all, Hamburg merchants continued to sail to the Faroes for a few years afterwards. A connection with Hamburg attempts to make the city a staple port for the stockfish trade during the sixteenth century, or with Danish attempts to limit Hamburg's dominance in Iceland, which started in 1547 when King Christian III gave the island to the Copenhagen merchants, is more plausible. Indeed, an annual Hamburg presence in Shetland starts in the mid-sixteenth century, and the annual number of ships rises to two to five after 1600, indicating that some merchants active in the Icelandic trade had switched to Shetland.[348] On average, we can say ten to twelve foreign ships a year traded with Shetland during the seventeenth century.[349]

The situation started to change in the second half of the sixteenth century, when Scottish landowners settled in Shetland in ever-greater numbers.[350] Many of these landowners, who often also had landed interests in Norway, established trading links with Norway and were hostile towards the German traders, who mainly dealt with the tenants directly. Some of them tried actively to disrupt the

for these statements, and they do not seem to fit with the otherwise unproblematic attitude of Shetlanders towards foreign traders in the first half of the sixteenth century. I would like to thank Brian Smith for sharing this information.

345 *HR* III, 4, no 68. See Section 3.4.1.

346 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 71; Friedland, "Hanseatic Merchants", 90–91. Friedland's conjecture that merchants from Deventer and Kampen possibly sailed to Shetland around 1498 is based on a very liberal reading of *HR* III, 4, no. 79, par. 198 and must be considered merely a hypothesis.

347 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 72.

348 Friedland, "Hanseatic Merchants", 91; Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 73.

349 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 14.

350 Linda Riddell, "Shetland's German Trade – on the Verge of Colonialism?", *Northern Scotland* 10 (2019), 3–5.

German North Atlantic trade, which resulted in a considerable number of cases of piracy around Shetland and also affected merchants travelling to and from Iceland (Table 3.1).[351] The unstable political situation in Scotland at the time, caused by dynastic troubles, interference from the English, and Protestant nobles who were rebelling, did not help. One of the most notable cases of piracy in Shetland around this time was the "theft" of one ship each from Bremen merchant Gerdt Hemeling and an unnamed Hamburg merchant by James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, who was pursued by the Scottish navy in 1567. Bothwell, the third husband of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, was a controversial figure in Scottish politics of the time, and had to flee the country when Mary was captured by rebel Protestant nobles. He first made his way to Shetland (he had been made Duke of Orkney and Shetland the same year), where he lost one of his ships. Bothwell then forced the German merchants in Shetland to rent out their ships, which he never returned. He was driven to Norway after a subsequent battle at sea, and was imprisoned by the Danish governor in Bergen. It seems the German merchants were never compensated for their losses, even though Hemeling went to great lengths to convince the Danish king to prosecute Bothwell for him.[352]

Unlike in Iceland and the Faroes, foreign international trade was never officially prohibited in Shetland. It simply became less and less attractive for German traders in the last decades of the seventeenth century, due to a combination of factors. First, there were the many wars in the North Sea, between the Dutch Republic and England and between England and France, which added risk to the endeavour. In particular, the Nine Years' War (1688–1697), in which the French deployed privateers around Shetland, and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714) proved especially disruptive, and forced Bremen and Hamburg merchants to relocate to Stade, which was occupied by neutral Sweden. Here they acquired Swedish sea passes for safe conduct.[353] Moreover, there was an economic crisis in the 1690s, combined with a smallpox epidemic in 1700, which also affected the Shetland landowning elite. Some of the large landowners started to trade with the European mainland themselves to supplement the reduced income from landowning, thereby competing with the German merchants.[354]

Other difficulties with the Shetland trade resulted from efforts by the English-Scottish crown to discourage foreign trade and fisheries and to stimulate the

351 Smith, 29–32, 43.

352 *SD 1195–1579*, nos. 164, 166, pp. 124–125. See also Section 7.3.

353 Claus Tiedemann, *Die Schiffahrt Des Herzogtums Bremen Zur Schwedenzeit (1645–1712)* (Stade, 1970), 43–44; Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 90–91.

354 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 44–45; Smith, "Shetland and Her German Merchants", 149–151; Riddell, "Shetland's German Trade", 8.

Table 3.1: Known cases of violence at sea in the North Atlantic trade in the sixteenth century.

Year	Place	Home port	Destination	Name	Actor of violence	Remarks	Source
1566	Whalsay sound, Shetland	Bremen	Whalsay	Herman Schroder	James Edmistoun, George Foggo, William		*SD* 1195–1579, 158
1566	Uyeasound, Shetland	Bremen	Uyeasound	Segebad Detken, Johan Beling	Simessen, John Blacater, George Blak		
1566	"Hammeltong", Shetland	Bremen	Shetland	Segebad Detken, Johan Beling	William Giffert, Robert Giamor, Peter Arres, Andrew Mot, John Roen, Peter Loch, John Piper		
1566	Scalloway, Shetland	Bremen	Scalloway	Hilmer Meyer	William Giffert, Robert Chalmer, Andrew Mot, Peter Arres		
1566	Shetland	Bremen	Shetland	Dirick Voege	James Edmistoun,		
1566	Cullivoe, Shetland	Bremen	Cullivoe	Johan Michel	George Foggo, William Simessen, John Blacater, John Ur		
1566	Laxfirth, Shetland	Bremen	Shetland		William Giffert, Robert Chalmer		
1567	"Ness in Schweineburgk-haupt", Shetland	Bremen; Hamburg	Shetland	Gerdt Hemeling (Bremen); unknown	James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell	Hemeling's ship was called the *Pellicaen*.	*SD* 1195–1579 nos. 164, 166
1574	Shetland	Emden			Robert Stewart, Earl of Orkney		Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade,* 43

1578		Lübeck	Iceland	Hans Delmenhorst, Herman Oldenseel	Thomas Clerck, Anthony Niport	The ship was from Bremen.	*Calendar of State Papers* 1579, no. 577
1578		[Hamburg]	Iceland	Hans von Kleve, Bernard Russe			
1578		Helsingør	Ríf / Arnarstapi, Iceland	Richard Wederbar	English pirates	The English queen was willing to pay compensation.	*KB* 1576–1579
1587	Between the Faroes and Shetland	Bremen	Búðir, Iceland	Vasmer Bake, Johan Hudeman, Evert Schroder	English pirates	Also carried 5 lasts of fish for the Danish king	RAK D11 Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15871200BRE00)
1587	Shetland	Bremen	Ríf, Iceland	Evert Schroder, Johan Hudeman, Jacob Koster	Captain Wicks, skipper Wodde	Also carried fish and train oil for the king. The ship was brought to Chester in England, and ended up on the Isle of Man.	RAK D11 Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15871231BRE00)
1588	Shetland, near Orkney	Hamburg	Vopnafjörður, Iceland	Paul Lindeman	Scottish pirates		Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15891025HAM00); NRS, SP1/1, nos. 150A, 150B.
1590	Shetland?	Hamburg	Vopnafjörður	Paul Lindeman	Scottish pirates		Pakke 26 (Suppl. II,18a) (15920310HAM00)

English and Scottish economy. These took the form of rising customs fees on imports to Scotland from the 1660s onwards. German merchants are even known to have borrowed money from Shetlanders to pay these fees.[355] Bremen merchants protested heavily against these increases, especially as they seem to have been used by local landowners to extract additional taxes illegally.[356] Their arguments were that the higher taxes were detrimental to the Shetland economy, which was dependent on foreign imports, and that it was unfair that they had to pay customs for commodities that they did not sell, e.g. beer they drank themselves or salt they used to cure fish.[357]

The final blow to the German Shetland trade came with the Treaty of Union in 1707, which united the kingdoms of England and Scotland. Although this also introduced new taxes on foreign trade, it probably was the assertion of English navigation laws that forced the German merchants to abandon the Shetland trade. These prohibited the import of foreign salt, needed to cure the fish bought in Shetland, aboard foreign vessels into the United Kingdom. Indeed, evidence for Bremen and Hamburg merchants in Shetland disappears shortly afterwards; the last ship from Bremen is documented in 1711. Their trade was taken over by English and local merchants, who still exported the fish to Bremen and Hamburg, which remained the main markets for this commodity.[358]

355 Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 87–88.

356 SAB 2-W.9.b.10.: Bremen complaints, 12 November 1661 (16611112BRE00); Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 39.

357 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Bremen complaints about Shetland customs, 1671 (16711026BRE00) and 1679 (16791216BRE00).

358 Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 92–94; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 40–42.

Part II: **The situation on the North Atlantic islands**

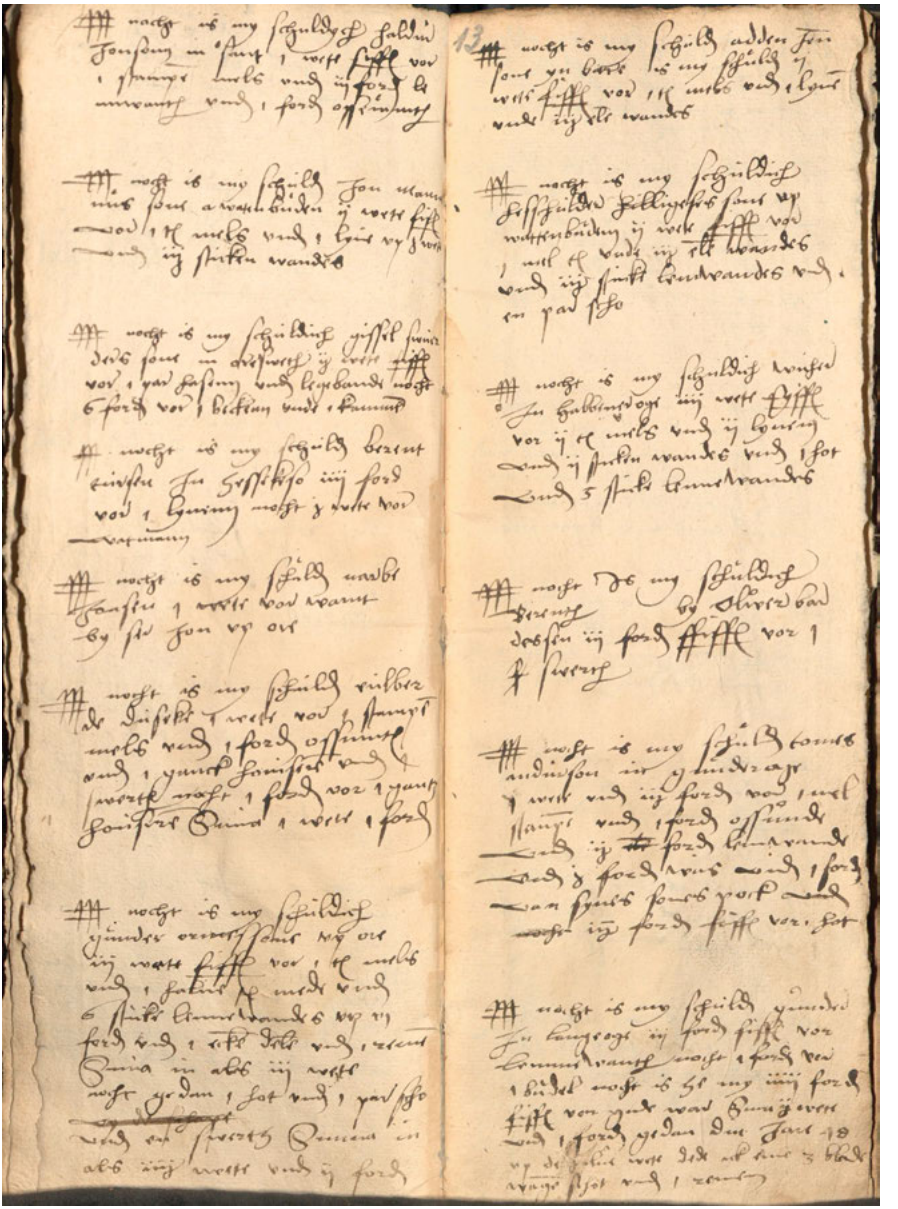

Figure 3.6: The debt register of Bremen merchant Clawes Monnickhusen, showing debts in Iceland in 1558. SAB 7,2051.

4 Relations between German merchants and islanders in the North Atlantic

Commercial relations between German merchants and islanders were shaped by the specific trading conditions in the North Atlantic and the great distance from the European continent, which complicated communication. In the words of Wendy Childs, the merchants found "a market essentially underdeveloped by current Western European standards, and one with a very harsh climate. It had a low population, and no permanent towns, not even in harbours, although people might congregate there when ships came in".[1] The remote and wild character of the North Atlantic islands influenced literary adaptations of the situation in the north, which emphasised its inhabitants' otherness. Examples are the at-times fantastic or exaggerated descriptions by Gories Peerse and Dithmar Blefken of the natural environment of Iceland and the customs of its inhabitants.[2] Before we begin the analysis of the German merchants' relations with these inhabitants, it is essential to first look at what it took the merchants to get to the North Atlantic.

4.1 Sailing to the North Atlantic

4.1.1 Ships and crews

It is difficult to make detailed statements about the ships used in the North Atlantic trade based on the written sources. Ships are rarely mentioned, and when one is, it is only denoted by a general term or a size in lasts. I will therefore limit myself to some general remarks. Regarding ship sizes, all kinds of sizes are mentioned. The Oldenburg ship sailing to Nesvogur in Iceland of 35 or 40 lasts was considered small by their Bremen colleagues,[3] and at the other end of the spectrum we find mentions of over 100 lasts.[4] Usually we find

1 Childs, "England's Icelandic Trade", 13.

2 See Section 1.1.

3 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): Bremen complaints about Oldenburg merchants in Stykkishólmur, 1597. In a letter from 20 April (15970420BRE00) the ship is claimed to be 35 lasts, whereas a letter from 2 November (15971102BRE00) puts it at 40.

4 "mit unserm schiffe uber hundert last gros". RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): defense of Hamburg merchants against Copenhagen complaints, 13 September 1602 (16020913HAM00). The same document mentions two Danish ships of 180 lasts, but it is likely that this refers to the capacity of the two ships combined.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-004

mentions of around 60 lasts in Iceland, and around 40 in Shetland.[5] A last was usually connected to a specific cargo, and was defined as 10 *hundert* (i.e. 1200) Icelandic stockfish,[6] although it is not entirely certain whether the last as ship size and the last as a unit of fish in the sources is exactly the same. Moreover, the mentions of the sizes of the ships are often very inexact to say the least, as there existed no modern concept of precision, and neither can we be sure that each fish had the same weight. Thus, we can make only very general estimations about the ships' capacities in metric units.[7]

The situation becomes even less clear with regard to ship types. In 1532, Hamburg skipper Lutke Schmidt described the ship on which he sailed to Básendar in Iceland as "not so big (which in German is called a *kraffel*) of circa 60 last".[8] It is not clear from this statement whether he called his ship a *kraffel* (caravel) because of its size or because of other characteristics; in an English source, the same ship is called a *holcke* (holk).[9] Most of the time, however, the merchants just used the generic term "ship".[10]

It is easier to determine the number of persons and the size of the crew on board these ships. The donation register of the confraternity of St Anne provides a wonderful source for the reconstruction of the people on board, as I

5 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 100–102; Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 21–22; Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 73.

6 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 73n5.

7 Usually, it is assumed that a last more or less corresponds to a little less than 2 metric tonnes, so that a Shetland ship would be just under 80 tonnes, and an Iceland ship just under 120. Hofmeister, "Hansische Kaufleute", 41; Harald Witthöft, "Maß- und Gewichtsnormen im hansischen Salzhandel", Hansische Geschichtsblätter 95 (1977): 313–314; Thomas Wolf, *Tragfähigkeiten, Ladungen und Maße im Schiffsverkehr der Hanse vornehmlich im Spiegel Revaler Quellen*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte NF 31 (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1986), 58, 66–68. Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 51–52; Mike Belasus, "Does Size Matter? Some Thoughts on the Cargo Capacity of German Ships that Sailed the North Atlantic", in *German Voyages to the North Atlantic Islands (c. 1400–1700)*, ed. Natascha Mehler, forthcoming. See also Section 2.1.

8 "nauis non ita magne (quam Germanica lingua appellamus ein kraffel) lastarum sexaginta circiter." *DI* 16:295 (15320823HAM01).

9 *DI* 16:310 (15320000LYN00).

10 Other terms for ships that appear now and then are *kogge* (cog; 1468), *ballinger, bollich* or *bojer* (1531), and *rasegel* (1568). Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 103–105; Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 24; Hofmeister, "Kaufleute auf Island", 43. On the difficulty and usefulness of defining medieval ship types on the basis of written sources, see Carsten Jahnke, "Koggen und kein Ende. Anmerkungen zu den Thesen von Reinhard Paulsen und Detlev Ellmers", *Zeitschrift für Lübeckische Geschichte* 91 (2011): 305; Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 123–125.

have shown elsewhere.[11] Generally, larger ships sailing to Iceland (typically those to Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík) had 40 to 60 on board, with an exceptional outlier of 77, of which only 10–20 were crew members; the rest were merchants and their servants. By contrast, many smaller ships had only 12–21 persons on board. For Shetland and the Faroe Islands, the ships seem to have been on the smaller end, with the number of persons on board being 10–18 in the case of Shetland, and 10–20 for the Faroes, with a maximum of 28.[12]

4.1.2 The voyage

The sailing times from Germany to the North Atlantic are hard to estimate, given the sparse sources mentioning this, the great distance, and the unpredictable weather conditions. According to David Fabricius, Iceland was located 260 miles away from the German North Sea coast, but the seafarers counted with 300, because it was usually not possible to sail there in a straight line.[13] This already indicates that the duration of the journey could vary substantially; Baasch estimates it typically took about four weeks.[14] Jones states that the voyage from England to Iceland could take "as little as a week, or as much as a month, depending on the winds",[15] and Þorláksson reports the time for sailing from Iceland to Bergen was "around two weeks, seldom less, sometimes a good deal more".[16] Actual sailing times range from four days (Bremen to Shetland in 1551)[17] to eleven weeks (Iceland to Bremen, 1569),[18] which are probably extremes. A more normal duration might be the voyage of Lutke Schmidt in 1532, who claimed to have left Hamburg on 11 March and arrived in the harbour of Básendar on the day before Easter (30 March).[19] According to Arngrímur Jónsson, it was possible to sail from Hamburg to Iceland in seven days, and in two days between Iceland and the Faroes, but he was trying to prove that Iceland was not as far away as continental

11 Holterman, "Ship Crews"; see also Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte".
12 Holterman, "Ship Crews". See also the online overview of the donation register: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-016
13 Fabricius, *Island und Grönland*, 13.
14 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 96; Hofmeister, "Kaufleute auf Island", 41.
15 Jones, "England's Icelandic Fishery", 108.
16 Helgi Þorláksson, "King and Commerce", 161–162.
17 Johann Focke, "Das Seefahrtenbuch des Brüning Rulves", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 26 (1916): 99.
18 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 36–37.
19 *DI* 16:295 (15320823HAM01).

authors were claiming, so these must be considered sailing times in ideal conditions.[20]

As trading in Iceland was forbidden before 1 May,[21] Lutke Schmidt was probably extremely early.[22] Having to wait for so long was both a waste of time and not welcomed by the local authorities. On the other hand, it was also not a good idea to arrive much later, because the Icelanders might already have traded with others. Germans complained that in 1603, the governor had waited until the Althing (June 30) to command the sheriffs to make the Icelanders repay their debts to the German merchants, which was "much too late in time, because the Icelanders sold their wares already, and [the Germans] were almost ready to leave the land again".[23] For this reason, the claim of Gories Peerse that the merchants usually left Germany around St John's Day (24 June) is unlikely, although there are instances of ships arriving in Iceland between June and August.[24]

Given these circumstances, it is interesting to see how much time merchants would have allotted for sailing north. Only a single letter from Bremen merchants sheds some light on this. In it, dated 29 March 1566, they mention that they have their ships ready to sail to Iceland, and are planning to leave in eight to fourteen days. If we assume that they aimed to arrive in Iceland shortly before 1 May, they must have expected to be sailing for two to three weeks, and had added some extra days in case of bad luck.[25]

In total, the Germans sailing to Iceland must have been away for three to four months, and returned between June and August, with some returning as late as September to November.[26] For the Faroes and especially Shetland, the voyage was considerably shorter. This made more than one voyage in one year possible, which did occur, as is recorded in the Hamburg donation register, for

20 Jónsson, "Brevis commentarius", 191.

21 See Section 4.1.3.

22 It should be recalled that Hamburg merchants had a great deal of influence in Iceland in the 1530s, and therefore trading before 1 May may have been tolerated at this time.

23 "so wahr es doch viel zu spete an der zeitt, dan es hetten die Ißlander ihre wahren schon an den man gebracht, und wir wahren beynahe segelreith aus dem lande zu segelenn". RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16040312HAM00). See also Section 4.2.

24 "Umme S. Johannis dach effte dar ummentrendt / Segeln se vor Norden yn de Have behend." Seelmann, "Gories Peerse", 91–92. Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 95; Sigurður Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 200.

25 "dewile wy uns nicht alleine solcke reise in acht oder vertein dagenn vorthonemen gerustet". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15660329BRE01).

26 Hofmeister, "Kaufleute auf Island", 41.

example.[27] Of course, the sailing time also depended on the route taken. It is most likely that most ships stayed near the coast as long as possible, making the likeliest route that which went up the Danish and Norwegian or the English and Scottish coasts and then via Shetland.[28] Indeed, it was hard for ships heading to Iceland and the Faroes as well to avoid passing Shetland, as is attested by the frequent mentions of shipwrecks and acts of piracy around Shetland (see Table 3.1 and Table 4.1.).

It is frequently mentioned that German merchants in the North Atlantic visited English harbours en route.[29] This assumption is probably based on alleged parallels with the Hanseatic Bergen-Boston trade, and the close relations between the confraternity of Iceland merchants and the society of England merchants in Hamburg (see Section 7.1.1.1), but the direct evidence for it is rather thin. It did indeed happen frequently in the early years of the North Atlantic trade,[30] as the Germans sought to out-compete the English in Iceland,[31] but it seems that most of the trade in later times was directly between the North Atlantic and Germany. In 1514, the Bergen Hanseatic *Kontor* complained that Hamburg merchants had first taken the fish from Iceland to England, which had been tolerated, but now they had started bringing the fish in large quantities to their home town, and Bremen merchants were doing the same.[32] This

27 Some examples are: 1588: Herman Cordes to the Faroes; 1592: Reineke Husman to the Faroes; 1622: Hinrich Grasmoller to Shetland.

28 Blefken, *Island*, 24–25, mentions that he sailed along the British coast in 1563, which took over two months (10 April–14 June). However, the veracity of Blefken's account is questionable: for example, he states that the Orkney Islands were uninhabited.

29 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 96; Hofmeister, "Kaufleute auf Island", 41.

30 To give a few examples: in 1477, a Hamburg ship on its way from Iceland to London ran aground on the coast of Yorkshire and was robbed by English knights (*HUB* 10:526); a contract from 1552 attests that Thomas Daye would buy all fish from Hamburg merchants that they would bring from Shetland to London (SAH 211–2, G 21); Hamburg merchant Bernd Salefeld sailed from London to Iceland in 1568 (Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 24); in 1574 and 1576, the donation register lists donations from fish sold in England (SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1, ff. 235v, 247v (15330000HAM00); and Luder Ottersen complained in 1593 that his trading partner Carsten Bake had sailed from Iceland to England and stayed there for a year: RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15930000XXX00).

31 For example, Peter Dambeke from Danzig sailed from Iceland to England in 1433–1434 (Forstreuter, "Islandfahrt", 115).

32 "Aver darna begunden de van Hamborch jarlix na Iszlande myt orem vissche Engelant to besoken, unde men wuste do in Dudesschen landen van deme vissche nicht groth to seggen. Men nu segelen se alle jar darhen myt 6, 8 offt teyn schepen unde bringen den visch nicht in Engelant, dan to Hamborch, unde de van Bremen hebben ock de fart angehaven unde segelen wedder up de Weser". Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 211–214; *HR* III, 9, no. 737 (15140000BER00).

Table 4.1: Wrecks of German merchant ships in the North Atlantic trade, recorded in the written sources.

Year	Place	Home port	Destination	Persons	Source
1469	Shetland	Bremen	Iceland	Marten Stene	Hänselmann, "Braunschweiger"
1479	Nidingen (Kattegat)	Danzig	Iceland	Ludke Wispendorf	Weinreich, *Danziger Chronik*, 23
1535	Jutland (return journey)	Hamburg	Iceland	Hinrick Martens (17 crew members died)	Lappenberg, *Hamburgische Chroniken*, 85
1538		Lübeck	Iceland		Lappenberg, 149
1539	Shetland	Hamburg	Iceland	Scapeskop	Lappenberg, 168–69
1550		Bremen	Shetland / England	Johan Reiners (died with the entire crew)	Focke, "Seefahrtenbuch", 99
1565	Grindavík, Iceland	Bremen	Grindavík	Hans Schomaker, Herman Krechting	SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15660329BRE00)
1576	Kumbaravogur, Icel.	Bremen	Kumbaravogur	Johan Munsterman	RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15790209BRE00)
1578	Weser (return journey)	Bremen	Kumbaravogur	Johan Munsterman (died with 28 men)	
1589	Elbe	Hamburg	Hólmur	Hans Delmenhorst (Lübeck) (died with the entire crew)	Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15930000XXX00)
1580s	Búðir, Iceland	Bremen	Búðir	Vasmer Bake	Pakke 25 (15930228BRE01)
1587	Elbe	Hamburg	Faroes	Joachim Thim	Evensen 169; *KB* 1584–1588, 802
1595	Elbe	Hamburg	Skagafjörður	Matthias Eggers (died)	Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15950703HAM00)
1599	Hrútafjörður, Iceland	Hamburg	Hrútafjörður	Johan Kloeting	SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4 (16030408HAM00)
1600	Hrútafjörður, Iceland	Hamburg	Hrútafjörður	Claus Wittemutze (Greifswald)	
1601	Elbe (return journey)	Hamburg	Hvalfjörður	Jochim Grove	Vol. 4 (16030228HAM00)
1601	Elbe / Helgoland[a]	Hamburg	Grindavík	Hans Hare	SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00); RAK D11 Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16011213HAM00)

[a]In the Elbe, according to the Hamburg donation register (15330000HAM00); near Helgoland, according to RAK D 11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): letter of Hans Steinkamp and Bernd Osthoff to Hamburg, 13 December 1610 (16011213HAM00).

corresponds with Hamburg attempts to establish a staple in Icelandic produce in the sixteenth century.[33] Indeed, when the Danish king ordained that Icelandic fish should only be brought to England on two occasions (1513 and 1574), this was connected with attempts to limit the German influence in Iceland, which meant that it was a hardship for them if they were not allowed to take fish directly to Germany.[34]

There are many sources confirming the practice of first bringing the Icelandic fish to Germany, and consequently to England. The Hamburg Pound toll register of 1486 shows that Icelandic stockfish were being imported into the Elbe city.[35] Friedland's analysis of London's custom accounts has shown that in 1514, merchants who had sailed to Iceland in the summer returned to Hamburg, where they sold part of the stockfish, added cloth from Salzwedel, Hannover, Münster, and Osnabrück and other commodities to the ship's cargo, and sailed to London.[36] From 1534–5 onwards, the cargo flows seem to have become separated, with a separate fleet sailing between Hamburg and London, with the latter still being a destination for large quantities of stockfish now being exported from Hamburg.[37] One figure active in this trade was Georg Gisze, the Danzig merchant in London of whom Holbein painted a famous portrait in 1532. He is known to have imported Icelandic stockfish from Hamburg to London and shipped English cloth in the other direction, but was not involved in the direct trade between Hamburg and Iceland.[38] Telling is also the story about the fish confiscated in London from Hamburg merchants in 1532 after English skipper John Breye claimed that the fish had been stolen from him by Hamburg merchants in Iceland, because it was marked with his house mark. In defence of the Hamburgers, statements were produced that claimed they had purchased the fish in Hamburg from the Iceland merchants there.[39]

Sailing between and around the islands was quite challenging. In the absence of detailed navigational charts and the limited information in descriptive

33 See Section 3.4.4.

34 *DI* 9:357; *DN* 6:657; *HR* III, 6, no. 515 (15130812NYK00); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 46.

35 Hormuth, Jahnke, and Loebert, *Pfundgeldlisten*, 225–227.

36 On the Hanseatic cloth trade with London, see Huang, *Die Textilien des Hanseraums*, 143–174.

37 Friedland, "Hamburger Englandfahrer", 8–18. See also Section 7.1.1.1.

38 Klaus Friedland, "Hans Holbein der Jüngere: Der Stalhofkaufmann Georg Gisze. Ein hansegeschichtlicher Kommentar", in *'Kopet uns werk by tyden': Beiträge zur hansischen und preußischen Geschichte : Walter Stark zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Nils Jörn, Detlef Kattinger, and Horst Wernicke (Schwerin, 1999), 176–177.

39 *DI* 16:304–305 (15321116HAM00, 15321116HAM01).

sailing manuals, much depended on the navigational skills and experience of the skipper and helmsman.[40] The great value attached to the long experience of specifically Hamburg skippers in the North Atlantic waters was regularly expressed in writing. For example in 1557, Lübeck merchants tried to hire a Hamburg crew for a journey to Iceland, "because they are better in sailing to Iceland than others".[41] And Claus von Kleve was hired by a Malmö shipowner in 1604 to sail to Patreksfjörður, where he had traded before, because "there is no one [else] now who knows the way in that harbour".[42] A case in 1602 illustrates the importance of an experienced helmsman: a Helsingør ship destined for Skagaströnd in northern Iceland with helmsman Marten Horneman from Hamburg on board could not get to the intended harbour because of the plenitude of sea ice. They considered going to Arnarstapi or Búðir instead, but decided not to because "the helmsman would not have been acquainted [with the waters] there".[43] Even with experienced crew members, navigation was sometimes problematic: in 1539, a Hamburg ship failed to find Iceland and roamed before the Greenland coast for eighteen weeks before returning to Hamburg, with a part of the crew dying from starvation and scurvy.[44] And when it took them eleven weeks to get home to Bremen from Iceland in 1569, those aboard the ship of Johan Munsterman suffered badly from a shortage of victuals and drinking water.[45]

The 1602 example also illustrates that sea ice was occasionally a hazard of sailing around Iceland. Normally the waters around Iceland would be ice free in summer, but after especially harsh winters, such as that of 1601/2, the remaining masses of sea ice made it difficult to reach the northern harbours (Figure 4.1). There are frequent mentions of sea ice along the Icelandic coasts

40 It is unknown whether descriptions of the waters in the North Atlantic were available to Hanseatic sailors; sea charts only became detailed enough for navigational purposes in the seventeenth century. See Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 134–136; Albrecht Sauer, "Negotiating Northern Waters. Navigating from Germany to the North Atlantic Islands", in *German Voyages to the North Atlantic Islands (c.1400–1700)*, ed. Natascha Mehler, forthcoming.

41 "wyle desuluenn der segelationn up Isslandt kundiger dann andere". *DI* 13:196 (15570320LUB01).

42 "dieweil nuhe nihmants vorhanden ist, welche solcher haven halber einige rechtmeßige einsage haben kan". SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: complaint of Claus von Kleve about interference by his colleagues, 17 March 1604 (16040317HAM00).

43 "sie hetten sonsten zwei haven gehabt, vor westen Stoppen und Berenstet, aber der steurman were dar nicht bekandt gewest". RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): (16020830HAM00). See Section 6.2.3.

44 Lappenberg, *Hamburgische Chroniken*, 169.

45 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 36–37.

Figure 4.1: Sea ice with polar bears along the east coast of Iceland on the *Carta Marina* (1539).

in the second half of the sixteenth century.[46] We find complaints referencing these problems on various occasions: in 1561 Lübeck merchants railed against the ban on the sulphur trade, stating that they sometimes had to return to Lübeck without having conducted any business at all because they could not reach the northern harbours;[47] in 1567 Bremen merchants in Berufjörður complained about sea ice;[48] and in 1603 Hamburg merchants in Hrútafjörður did as

46 Astrid Ogilvie and T. Jónsson, "'Little Ice Age' Research: A Perspective from Iceland", *Climate Change* 48 (2001): 31.

47 "eß sich je zu zeitenn begibt, daß men dahin nicht alle jar durch vielheit deß eises und sunst anderen uff der reyse furstehendenn fhar und vorhinderung, anlangen kann, sunder die außreitung der schyff dahin vergeblich, und also mith grossem trefflichenn schaden thuen muß". RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22/23) (15610228LUB00).

48 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): Bremen answer to a complaint of Heinrich Mumme, 28 February 1567, in which it is suggested that the Bremen merchants cannot reach

well. The latter could not get away from Iceland because they had to repair their ship and got caught in the ice, suffering dreadfully when they ran out of beer and bread and had to consume water and "unnatural food" instead.[49]

4.1.3 *Kaupsetning*

Upon arrival on the North Atlantic islands, the merchants met with the local official (the governor, bailiff, or sheriff in Iceland and the Faroes, or the foud in Shetland), who set the terms of the trade with them, the so-called *kaupsetning* (Iceland, Faroes) or *coupsetting* (Shetland). At this event, the tariffs were paid to the officials, licences were checked, prices were fixed (see Table 2.2) and the trading site was given to the merchants, who were free to trade from that moment onwards.[50] In Hafnarfjörður, it seems to have been custom that the bailiff was invited for a meal after the *kaupsetning* was done.[51] The sheriff also kept the weights to be used by the merchants, as we learn from a complaint by sheriff Carsten Bake in Snæfellsnes, who complained about the new weights given to him by lawman Jón Jónsson in 1600, which were lighter and therefore disadvantageous for the merchants.[52] In Iceland, the *kaupsetning* was not allowed to take place before 1 May.[53]

In Shetland, there was no fixed date on which the trading season opened, but we know about the process of *coupsetting* from the complaints about the Shetlanders against sheriff Lawrence Bruce in 1577. The Shetlanders claimed that it had been custom that the foud of the parish would fix the prices, and the merchants would give a barrel of flour or beer to the landowner and a barrel of beer to the tenants. Bruce, however, had confiscated these barrels for himself.[54] These complaints also show that the weights used for trading in Shetland were

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Berufjörður every two or three years because of the sea ice, which is most likely an exaggeration (15670228BRE00).

49 "sie aber mit großer nodt alda gelegenn, und wegen biehr und brodts mangell, haben mußen wasser trinckenn, und unnattuerliche speiße essenn". SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: letter of 8 April 1603 (16030408HAM00).

50 The procedure in Iceland is for example described in a letter from Hamburg merchants in Vatnsleysa from 13 September 1602 (RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) – 16020913HAM00).

51 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 201.

52 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: testimony of Carsten Bake, 30 December 1600 (16001230BRE00).

53 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch" (2001): 35; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 63.

54 David Balfour, ed., *Oppressions of the Sixteenth Century in the Islands of Orkney and Zetland: From Original Documents* (Edinburgh, 1859), 41–42, 63–64; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 15–16.

kept by the lawmen, and were marked by the lawman and the foud to confirm their veracity. In addition to keeping the barrels, Bruce had begun to use customised weights in order to enrich himself by extracting more customs.[55]

In the Faroes, it is less clear what constituted the normal practice. When the new governor Niel Skinkel appeared before the Faroese governing assembly Løgting in 1584 and asked about the customs that had to be paid on imported commodities, he was told, "Here in the land no trade has been set since the time that the late Thomas Koppen was enfeoffed with the Faroes". The assembly continued to fix the rates for customs for a range of imported products, which remained valid until 1652.[56] From sources from the early seventeenth century, we know that the lawmen of the Løgting, which was located on the same premises as the main (possibly only) trading site on the islands on Tinganes (Tórshavn),[57] also ensured the quality of the imported goods and the accuracy of the weights and measures used.[58]

The rates of tariffs remained relatively constant throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at least for Iceland. In 1316, the Norwegian king introduced a tax on the Icelandic export called *sekkjagjald*, which was to be paid in Bergen, and amounted to six fish per each *hundrad* (120), or five percent. After 1463, it was collected in the harbours in Iceland. In the sixteenth century, on top of the *sekkjagjald*, foreign merchants had to pay 20 gulden per ship for use of the harbour,[59] or 30 Lübeck mark.[60] For the Bremen merchants in the harbours Kumbaravogur and Búðir in 1567, the customs were also specified in kind, namely one last of flour, one last of beer, half a last of bread, half a barrel of salt, half a barrel of vinegar, and 25 horseshoes.[61] Although the *sekkjagjald* probably remained the same, the harbour dues were increased in the late sixteenth century: in 1577, Stade merchants paid one Portugaleser or sixteen Reichsthaler,[62] and shortly before the

55 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 237, f. 10r; Balfour, *Oppressions*, 36–37.

56 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 106; for a full list of import customs, see Arent Berntsen, *Danmarckis oc Norgis fructbar Herlighed* (Copenhagen, 1656), 332–335.

57 See Section 5.3.

58 Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home", 184–185.

59 *DI* 11:340 (15450320KOL00); 11:341 (15450320KOL01); 11:367 (15450630TIN00); Karlsson, *Lífsbjörg Íslendinga*, 269–70; Sigurðsson, "The Making of a 'Skattland'", 215; Imsen, "Royal Dominion", 59.

60 This is according to the 1552–1553 accounts of Eggert Hannesson: *DI* 12:323.

61 "enn lest meell. enn lest øell. enn halff lest brød. enn halff thønne huidt saltt. enn half thønne eddicke. och tiuge fem gang heste skouff". *DI* 15:28 (RAK RAL) (15671031AAR01); Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 203.

62 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25): list of licensed harbours, 1576–1585 (15860000XXX01).

introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in 1599, the dues were doubled to two Portugaleser (32 Reichsthaler).[63] In 1602, Hamburg merchants complained that they had to pay as much as 35 Reichsthaler.[64] In Shetland before the rise in customs in 1612, the situation was similar: German merchants had to pay annual harbour dues of six engelotten and one daler, plus as customs four barrels of beer, two barrels of flour, two hams, fifteen ells of linen, and a gilded gun.[65]

4.1.4 Life on board and in the trading stations

It is hard to describe the daily life of the German merchants and sailors in the trading stations on the North Atlantic islands, which is usually not mentioned in the written sources. The situation must also have varied according to the booths and other buildings available. In a place like Hafnarfjörður, where two ships with up to 40 merchants on board anchored annually and where a church was built that also served as a social centre for the German community, the trading station might have had the character of a small settlement, and many merchants might have slept on shore. In other places where there was less infrastructure and merchants travelled around, most of them must have slept on the ships.[66]

Typically, we only hear about daily life in the trading stations when violent conflicts broke out. In Shetland, we get a glimpse of the daily life of the Germans in 1557, when crew members of a Bremen ship in Whalsay who had gone to Laxfirth in a boat (Figure 5.3), returned late to the ship and got into a fight with the skipper Cordt Hemeling. The skipper was injured by ship's carpenter Gerdt Breker, and died more than a week later.[67] The court books of Shetland (1602–1604, 1615–1629) record quite a few disturbances of the social

63 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): Hamburg complaints against increases in tolls, February 1599 (15990204HAM00, 15990201HAM00).

64 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): letter of Hamburg merchants in Vatnsleysa from 13 September 1602 (16020913HAM00).

65 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: final plea of Johan Runge against Segebad Detken, 14 December 1562 (15621214BRE00); 1612 complaints against increases in tolls (16121215BRE00).

66 See Section 5.4.

67 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 75. Gerdt Breker was obliged to sign a confession of guilt, and to pay a compensation to Cordt Hemeling's brother Gerdt. Back in Bremen, he tried to annul his obligation, claiming that Hemeling could not have died from the injuries inflicted upon him, and that he had been forced by the circumstances to sign the confession. The resulting court case is documented in SAB 2-R.11.kk.; *SD 1195–1579*, no. 110.

order, among others adultery with local women,[68] violence between Germans and Shetlanders and among Germans themselves,[69] and merchants being locked up in prison and escaping from there.[70] In Iceland, there is a case known from 1599 where Hinrich Ratkens from Hamburg stabbed his colleague Hans Hambrock to death after the latter had hit the former in the face in a fight about the unloading of a ship.[71] Finally, there are some mentions of islanders stealing fish or other commodities from (the booths of) German merchants, both in Shetland and Iceland.[72] However, these cases probably reflected the exceptions rather than the norm.

With the absence of larger settlements or urban centres on the North Atlantic islands, the trading stations of foreign merchants functioned as marketplaces and by extension as places for social gathering. Dithmar Blefken recorded the Icelanders' habit of getting drunk on the beer and wine of the German merchants when they were visiting the trading stations to do business, as did Gories Peerse.[73] According to Fabricius, a trading transaction was not considered complete until the locals had been filled with beer and wine "like a bagpipe".[74] These accounts are undoubtedly exaggerated or otherwise distorted, but they do illustrate the social significance of the trading stations.[75] In 1545, governor Otto Stigsen emphasised that no trading should occur before 1 May, to prevent people from "abandoning the fishery, and giving in to drinking beer near the ships and hanging around".[76] On the other side, there is no doubt that the Germans also resorted to excessive alcohol consumption at times, and it is not hard to imagine that alcohol played a part in the deadly fight between Hans Hambrock and Hinrich Ratkens.

68 *CBS 1602–1604*, 22

69 *CBS 1602–1604*, 28, 33, 34, 107, 120. See also Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 65–66.

70 *CBS 1602–1604*, 106

71 SAH 211–2, H 9; Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 200–201.

72 *AÍ* 2, 66; *CBS 1602–1604*, 30; Skúlason, 193.

73 "Wert en dar Beer mit Schepen hen gebracht, / Se drinken, dewyle ydt wart, mit macht. / Aver achte Dage laten se ydt nicht duren, / Se furchten, ydt mochte fus vorsuren". Seelmann, "Gories Peerse", 123–124; Blefken, *Island*, 40–43.

74 "de Koep ys nicht fast vnde bündich / ydt sy denn / dat se mit vnsem Wyn vnde Beer / alse eine Sackpipe erst voll vpgevüllet syn". Fabricius, *Island und Grönland*, 18.

75 See Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 204–205; *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 143–144.

76 "vnnd solchs derhalben das die Leut ann der fischereij nichts verseumen, vnnd sich mehr des Bijrtrinckens beij denn schiffenn, vnnd mussig gehens vberlassenn, denn der fischereij, wilchs dem kauffmann vnd leuten zuschadenn". *DI* 11:341 (15450320KOL01).

Figure 4.2: Scandinavian drinking customs. From Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555).

The trading places had a special legal status, such that offences and crimes committed there resulted in more-severe punishment than was the case with comparable crimes committed elsewhere. This *Marktfrieden* or *kaupfriðr* was an ancient institution for protecting foreign merchants in marketplaces that dated back to the Early Middle Ages.[77] In Iceland, the German merchants seem to have had a certain degree of legal autonomy in the trading stations, which they misused at times by taking the law into their own hands. The punitive rights of merchants at the trading stations were one of the main issues during the 1545 dispute between German merchants and governor Otto Stigsen. According to the Germans, it always had been custom that after the trade had been set, the trading site was handed over to the merchants, which included the right to punish (excluding capital punishment) those who had committed all kinds of crimes, whereby the fines were donated to the poor (i.e. the confraternity of St Anne).[78]

77 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 62; Carsten Müller-Boysen, "Factors for the Protection of Merchants in Early Medieval Northern Europe", *Journal of the North Atlantic* 8 (2015): 210–215; Carsten Jahnke, "Custom and Toll in the Nordic Area c. 800–1300", in *Nordic Elites in Transformation, c. 1050–1250, Volume I: Material Resources*, ed. Bjørn Poulsen, Helle Vogt and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, vol. 1 (London, 2019).
78 *DI* 11:340 (15450320KOL00).

The donation register regularly mentions fines (*brokegeldt*), occasionally from merchants[79] and often from Icelanders.[80]

Governor Stigsen countered that the law of the land did not grant sovereignty to the German merchants in the trading stations, and that they were inflicting excessively harsh punishments upon their clients, for example binding Icelanders to their anchors. Instead, they only had the right to take debtors or lawbreakers prisoner and hold them at the trading station until the sheriff arrived.[81] Nevertheless, the local authorities continued to tolerate a certain degree of merchant-administered justice, possibly because they simply did not have the power to control it. The donation register of the confraternity of St Anne regularly lists fines from Icelanders all the way up to the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly.

Likewise, the Shetland court books emphasise that if a crime had taken place at a *frie coupsta* (trading site), the monetary penalty was double or triple, highlighting the special place of trading sites in Shetlandic society.[82] This is also illustrated by the many documents that were written and signed in the booths of German merchants at the trading sites in Shetland, in one case even on a Hamburg ship.[83] The German merchants thereby also often – but not always – acted as witnesses to the signing of these documents.[84] The contents

79 A similar practice of donating *brokegeldt* from crew members during the journey to charitable and religious institutions is known from Bremen: Johann Georg Kohl, *Das Haus Seefahrt zu Bremen* (Bremen, 1862), 4–5. There was likely a similar practice of donating penalties paid by their North Atlantic clients as well.

80 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00). For example, two Icelanders "tor brocht" (1538, f. 16v); "Item van eynem Islander 1/2c vysck de vor braken syn" (1539, f. 19r); "van eynem gevangen manne 40 fisch" (1539, f. 24r); "noch van brock van eynen Islander LX fisch" (1544, f. 45v).

81 "Souil ist aber dem kaufmann durch die vogte vøll nachgegebenn, [. . .] das der kaufmann dj jenigen als dem kaufman schuldig odder strafbare handlunge vf der kaufstedt treijbenn, angehaltenn werdenn mugen, biss zu des Vogts Ankunft, oder das deselbigenn dem vogte vber antwortt, solchs ist auch vonn mir nicht geweigert worden". *DI* 11:341 (15450320KOL01); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 111–112.

82 *CBS 1602–1604*, 34, 120. The latter reference, about a fight between the German Edward Mair and Shetlander Jhone Lumisdale in 1604, specifies the site as "between the sie and the bakis in ane frie coupsta". Both men had to pay triple the usual fine.

83 *SD 1612–1637*, no. 121: 15 July 1614, at the "South Dutch booth" in Uyeasound, witness was Dirick Voege; no. 668: 11, 19, and 21 September and 4 and 28 October 1622, at the "Dutch booths" in Uyeasound, Urafirth, Sand, and Scalloway (no German witnesses); no. 764: 17 October 1623 on Peter Rocks' ship, the *Fortoun*, of Hamburg, with witnesses Peter Rocks, citizen of Hamburg, and his servant Herman Meyer ("Harmon Meyir").

84 Smith, "Shetland and Her German Merchants", 149.

often do not show any relation to the business of German merchants, which suggests that the German booths were chosen for reasons of convenience, be it because they were the nearest neutral meeting places, because of the availability of writing material, or even other conveniences such as alcohol.

4.2 The credit system

Central to the relations between German merchants and their clients on the North Atlantic islands was the credit system. Merchants would supply their clients with foodstuffs, equipment, and other commodities on credit, for which the latter paid in stockfish the next year when the merchants returned, until the debt was repaid. This system originated in Bergen, where it was used in the trade between the Hanseatic merchants and the stockfish producers from northern Norway and the *skattlands*, and regulated by the *Kontor*. When German merchants established direct trading routes with the North Atlantic islands after 1468, they adopted the same system, with the Bergen *Kontor* no longer being involved.[85] Similar trading techniques were in use in other parts of the Hanseatic network, such as the Baltic lands and Poland and even in southern Europe, and resembled the putting-out system in use in pre-modern manufacturing in which a merchant provided the capital to subcontractors, who produced the desired products for him at home.[86]

The credit system was intrinsically connected to the barter trade: the direct exchange of objects without the use of money. Barter has traditionally been considered a "primitive" way of trading that eventually led to the introduction of money to overcome the difficulty of obtaining a desired object when a great variety of commodities is on offer. However, barter can also be considered a mode of trading in its own right that often exists alongside money-based exchange systems and has its own dynamics. Because barter is direct and needs no further transactions, it depends on good information about what the available and desired objects are in order to evolve into an economic system.[87] Due

85 Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*, 148.

86 Marian Małowist, "A Certain Trade Technique in the Baltic Countries in the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries", in *Poland at the XIth International Congress of Historical Sciences* (Warsaw, 1960), 103–105; "Merchant Credit and the Putting-out System: Rural Production during the Middle Ages", *Review* 4, no. 4 (1981): 671. Angelika Lampen, in *Fischerei und Fischhandel*, 148n757, characterised the credit system in the North Atlantic as a putting-out system as well.

87 Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones, "Introduction: Barter, Exchange and Value", in *Barter, Exchange and Value. An Anthropological Approach*, ed. Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones (Cambridge, 1992), 8–9.

to the limited variety of commodities in the North Atlantic that were of interest to continental European traders and the dependence of the islanders on foreign import for many products, as well as the peripheral location of the islands, the economic situation was clear to both parties. This was connected to the development of an export oriented fishing industry in northern Scandinavia, leading to an abandonment of farming and therefore a greater dependence on imports.[88] While doing business in the north therefore did not necessitate the use of money, the unpredictable nature of natural resources made the extension of credit hard to avoid, if a constant availability of resources was to be ensured.[89] However, it is debatable whether the trade in the North Atlantic can be considered a "pure" barter system, since stockfish for export was highly standardised and regulated.[90] One might therefore consider stockfish, or *wadmal* earlier, as a substitute for money, with a fixed and widely accepted value.

4.2.1 The credit system in Bergen

As the credit system on the North Atlantic islands originated in Bergen, it is worth taking a closer look at how it was organised there before we analyse the insular situation. According to Arnved Nedkvitne, it originated around the middle of the fourteenth century, when stockfish prices rose after the Black Death had killed a large part of the stockfish producers in northern Norway. Ordinances regulating Hanseatic credits first appeared in Norwegian law in 1350, and the extension of credit to Norwegians seems to have become widespread after this year.[91] The temporary shortage of stockfish forced merchants to offer favourable trading conditions to their Norwegian partners in order to guarantee a steady supply of stockfish. One of the ways they did this was by extending credit to fishermen. Credit was extended not only to Norwegians, but to fishermen and traders from the North Atlantic islands as well. For example, the testament of Hermen Witstock from Lübeck in 1429 mentions debts with Icelanders, Shetlanders, and Faroese clients,[92] and the bishop of Orkney is also known to have been indebted to Lübeck merchants in Bergen in the same year.[93] Another related factor is the

88 Riis, "Entwicklung der norwegischen Wirtschaft", 33.
89 Humphrey and Hugh-Jones, "Introduction", 8–9.
90 See Section 2.1.1.
91 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 402–403.
92 Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 61 no. 88.
93 *HUB* 6:255; *DN* 1:655.

Figure 4.3: Barter exchange in northern Scandinavia. From Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555).

establishment of the *Kontor* in the 1360s, which was instrumental in regulating the relations between merchants and fishermen and as such created a credit system.[94]

In the older scholarly literature on this topic, the discussion of the credit system revolved around the question whether it was advantageous or disadvantageous for Norwegians and the inhabitants of the North Atlantic islands, who ended up being dependent on foreign grain imports. The current scholarly view is that the system provided advantages for both sides. The stockfish producers were guaranteed a steady supply of foreign commodities, even in bad fishing years. There are no signs that German creditors calculated interest on the credit they extended, as their goal was to create permanent trade relations. Moreover, fishermen had to pay slightly higher taxes than non-fishing peasants in Norway, which suggests that they were generally wealthier. The extant expensive church art in northern Norway suggests that the inhabitants were on the whole profiting from the system.[95] For the Hanseatic merchants, it provided the advantage of binding stockfish producers to them and therefore shutting out competitors. The credit system is therefore seen as one of the main reasons why the *Kontor* managed to create a near monopoly on the stockfish trade.[96]

94 Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*, 149–150.

95 See the discussion of this topic in Wubs-Mrozewicz, 150–151.

96 It is therefore not surprising that the Bergen *Kontor* frequently complained in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that the direct trade with the North Atlantic was damaging its credit system. See Section 3.4.3.

The extending of credit did, of course, carry the risk that clients would not repay their debts. The Hanseatic merchants employed strategies to prevent this from happening, in which the *Kontor* was instrumental. The position of Bergen as a staple port guaranteed that *nordfahrer*, the Norwegians who brought the stockfish there, would return regularly, and therefore a permanent presence in town was required to deal with the debtors. For this reason, the *Kontor* regulated that only *wintersitzer*, i.e. the merchants who stayed in winter, could extend credit to *nordfahrer*. Moreover, nobody was allowed to trade with a *nordfahrer* who was still indebted to a *wintersitzer* (called *unfrige kopgenaten*, 'unfree trading partners'), which prevented them from selling the fish to others while there were still outstanding debts. There was even a penalty for trading with someone's 'free trading partners' (*frige kopgenaten*, i.e. those who were not indebted), although it was a bit less than the penalty for trading with the unfree partners.[97] Merchants who visited in summer could therefore only trade indirectly through the *wintersitzer*. Due to the widespread use of credit and the constant extension of additional credit to *nordfahrer*, the system promoted a "conservative type of paternalism".[98]

However, the *Kontor*'s winter residents had one problem in the case of payment problems: they were not allowed to travel north to conduct trade. The authorities were keen on preventing foreign merchants from travelling north, so in 1444 the general prohibition of sailing north to trade was expanded to apply to the reclaiming of debts. Norwegian law contained regulations to strengthen the creditor's position, but it did not go as far as the *Kontor* statutes (which were kept secret from the authorities), and it did not prevent an indebted *nordfahrer* from trading with someone else. Although state officials provided help in collecting debts in the north, they did not do this for free, and often let state interests prevail above those of Hanseatic merchants. Therefore, the best hope of the winter residents was to get hold of a debtor when he happened to come to Bergen, and resolve the matter themselves.[99] The same was true in extreme cases in which the credit system was threatened by competitors, as in 1368/9 when Hanseatic merchants were absent from Bergen and English traders took over the trading with their debtors. When the Hanseatic merchants returned, they expelled the English by force to secure the continuation of the credit system.[100]

97 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 406.
98 Nedkvitne, 412; Lampen, *Fischerei und Fischhandel*, 148.
99 Nedkvitne, *German Hansa*, 408–412.
100 Nedkvitne, 407–408.

4.2.2 The credit system in Iceland and the Faroes

The use of credit in the foreign trade was widespread in Iceland when it was still dominated by Norwegian merchants. The law code *Jónsbok* (1281) contains detailed regulations for cases in which debtors would not pay their debts, including fines. These were amended in 1294, when the penalty was set to 24 ells for every *hundrad* (=120 *ells*, i.e. 20 percent) indebted *wadmal*, the dominant export commodity at that time. According to the frequent complaints, these rules were necessary, as clients not paying their debts was quite common. The law code also guaranteed the support of local officials for enforcing payment. Despite the downsides, Helgi Þorláksson argues that the use of credit was widespread and had arisen due to the great distance and infrequent communication between Norway and Iceland, which made direct barter trade difficult.[101]

The North Atlantic islands as *skattlands* being subject to the staple of Bergen, their inhabitants – often through Norwegian middlemen – also participated in the credit system of the Bergen *Kontor*. When German merchants established direct trading relations with the islanders, they continued to extend credit to the latter. However, the conditions on the North Atlantic islands were quite different from those in Norway, mainly because the *Kontor* was cut out of the credit relationships. The absence of a central institution made it difficult to regulate the credit relations between German merchants and islanders. This was especially acute in the case of Iceland, where many different merchants used many harbours all over an island of substantial size. This must have been one of the reasons for the attempts to establish a permanent presence in Hafnarfjörður by Hamburg merchants in the early sixteenth century.

One of the consequences of the absence of a controlling institution was that it was impossible to exclude customers from trading with others. This was especially troublesome in the case of debts, as a merchant could never be sure which would be repaid first, and by extension, whether a customer would actually repay a debt, as he could easily trade with other merchants. Indeed, there are many references to Icelanders trading with multiple merchants at the same time. Bremen merchant Bernd Losekanne, who had been trading with the inhabitants of the region around Berufjörður, although they were still indebted to other merchants with whom Losekanne had a dispute, defended his actions in 1575 by claiming that the Icelanders were free to trade with whomever they wanted. He even explicitly contrasted this custom to the situation in Bergen,

101 Þorláksson, "King and Commerce", 157–161.

where each farmer was bound to a merchant by the *Kontor*.[102] A testimony from local sheriff Eiríkur Árnason regarding the same dispute makes clear that he had traded with both Bernd Losekanne and Matthias Eggers from Hamburg.[103] One possibly extreme case is that of Vigfús Erlendsson, lawman and former governor of Iceland, whose heritage after his death in 1521 lists unpaid debts in fish and *wadmal* with eleven German and seven English merchants.[104]

There was probably much overlap in customer relationships with merchants in nearby harbours, especially in regions with a high density of trading stations. The debt registers of Clawes Monnickhusen (Figure 3.6) and the Oldenburg merchants, who coincidentally were active in the same harbour Kumbaravogur, give us an idea of the extent of these relationships (Figure 4.4).[105] In both cases, the customers with debts listed were within a range of about 50 km from the trading station. Many of these customers actually lived closer to the harbours Ríf, Arnarstapi, and Búðir, and it is possible that they were indebted to merchants trading in those harbours as well. An analysis of the Oldenburg account book by Ólafur Ásgeirsson has shown that of the 27 known farms in the district of Eyrarsveit near the trading station, possibly 13 were indebted to the Oldenburg merchants. The others might have been abandoned, not have traded at all, or have had debts with other merchants.[106] A similar image comes forth from the testimonies of the clients of Bremen merchants in Berufjörður. One of these clients lived in Hjaltastaðir í Utmannasveit,[107] which was about 90 km from the trading station in Fýluvogur, and much closer to Vopnafjörður, which was a trading station in use by Hamburg merchants (Figure 5.2).

With these sometimes complicated and many credit relationships (Clawes Monnickhusen's account book lists over 110 debtors in one year,)[108] it was of vital importance to keep account of the credit extended to customers. Bernd

102 "ein großer underscheid in der handlung mit den bauren in Ißland, und den bauren zu Bergen in Norwegen, da die contoer steiff und vest gehallten warden". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: defense of Losekanne against accusations from Christoffer Meyer, 6 February 1576 (15760206BRE00).

103 SAB 2-R.11.ff. testimony of Eiríkur Árnason, 6 August 1575 (15750806SKR00). See Section 6.6.3.

104 *DI* 8:579.

105 The customer relationships in these books were analysed by Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001"; and Ásgeirsson, "Verzlunarbók".

106 Árni Daníel Júlíusson, *The Provincial State. Studies in the Effects of Central Power on Social Development in Iceland 1550–1650* (Reykjavík, 2002), 180–182.

107 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): testimonies of priests Snorri Hallsson and Arni Olafsson, 11 August 1591 (15910811BER00).

108 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 30.

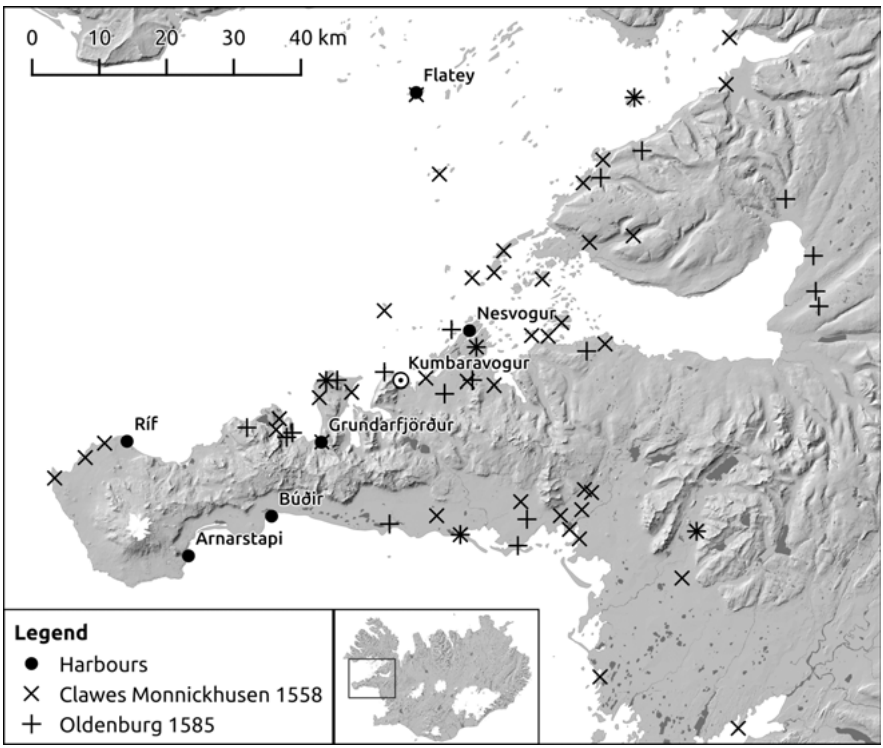

Figure 4.4: Locations of the debtors of Clawes Monnickhusen (1558) and the Oldenburg Icelandic trade company (1585) in Kumbaravogur, Snæfellsnes.

Losekanne mentioned above confirmed this by stating that, according to custom, when the Germans left Iceland in late summer, the keys of the trade booth *and the debt book* were handed over to the farmer living closest by, so that they would not be lost at sea in the case of a shipwreck.[109] What could possibly happen in the absence of a debt book is illustrated by a note from 1586 in the donation register of the Hamburg confraternity, which tells of an Icelander who came to Hafnarfjörður with stockfish to repay his father's debts. However, he had forgotten the name of the merchant to whom his father was indebted, and

109 "den schlüßel mit dem schuldbuch dem nehesten nachbauer zu bewahren gegeben nach Islandischem gebrauch umb nachweisung, so unß in der seh schade ankeme, etc.". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: defense of Losekanne against accusations from Christoffer Meyer, 6 February 1576 (15760206BRE00).

left the fish in Hafnarfjörður. Part of the fish was donated to the confraternity until it became clear to whom the fish belonged.[110]

Merchants in the North Atlantic did have one advantage over their fellows in Bergen: they were free to travel around, which means they could visit their debtors at home. Testimonies collected from Icelandic clients by Bremen merchants in Berufjörður in the early 1590s confirm that this occurred. Moreover, archaeological evidence for trading stations that do not appear in the German sources, such as Kumbaravogur on Svínanes, also suggests that the merchants were not confined to the harbour to which they had been assigned.[111] Indeed, when the Danish king introduced the Danish trade monopoly, he forbade the German merchants to leave their designated harbours and to extend new credits, even when they still had valid licences. The merchants complained that this would greatly reduce the chances of getting their debts repaid, since Icelanders would not come to them only to pay their debts.[112]

In addition, merchants in Iceland seem to have had some degree of freedom to take measures against debtors who did not pay, as has been sketched above. In Bergen the *Kontor* did have its own court, which adjudicated on matters between Norwegians and German merchants as well;[113] the merchants on Iceland could, however, to a certain extent take the law into their own hands, although governor Stigsen tried to limit the abuse of this power in 1545. The merchants claimed that they had the right to hold debtors captive until their debt had been paid or until appropriate deposit or insurance had been given,[114] to which Stigsen responded that the sheriff would take care of this. Icelandic

110 "Noch is ein man gekamen in de Hanenforde und darsulvest fisch vor synem vader willen betalen und des mannes namen nicht gewust de de schuldt enthfangen scholde dem syn vader hadde schuldich gewest. Derwegen hefft he den fisck dar tho stede gelaten, darvan hebbe wy genamen 44 f(ische) und desulven tho dem vorgeschreven armen fisch geworpen beth up wider anspracke [etc.]". SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 316r.

111 See Section 6.3.7.

112 "uns [. . .] dabey verbotten, das wir uns nicht soltenn vordristen von unserer ohe zugehen unsere schulde einzuforderen oder etwas zu kauffen, [. . .] da aber jemandt der Ißlander wurde zu uns kommen, und uns etwas zu kauff bringen, oder unsere schulde bezalen wolte, solchs solte ohne gefahr und uns anzunehmen erlaubet sein". RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16020913HAM00).

113 See Geir Atle Ersland, "Das Handelsgericht des Hansekontors in Bergen", in *Hanse und Stadt. Akteure, Strukturen und Entwicklungen im regionalen und europäischen Raum. Festschrift für Rolf Hammel-Kiesow zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael Hundt and Jan Lokers (Lübeck, 2014), 89–102.

114 "Daezu haben sie auch macht gehatt jre schuldener vff derselben Khauffstett anzuhallten, bis die bezahlunge oder aber gnnugsame Caution oder vorsicherung darfur gestehenn". *DI* 11:340 (15450320KOL00).

law did continue to weigh in on the issue of debts to foreigners: in an Althing verdict from 1584 about debts to Hamburg merchants, the penalties for debtors from 1294 were reiterated.[115] In exceptional cases, problems with debts in Iceland were even brought before the Hamburg city council. Bishop Jón Arason of Hólar, who was indebted to Hamburg merchant Jacob Thode, sent three representatives to Hamburg in the winter of 1542/43 to come to an agreement about the payment of his debts before the city's high court.[116]

Generally, however, German merchants must have been relatively tolerant towards their debtors, especially when it had been a bad fishing year and customers had trouble paying their debts. It was not unusual that new debts were made before old ones were paid, and that payment extended over the course of multiple years.[117] This reality of course also posed a very real problem to the merchants, as it put great stress upon continuation of their business there. In the case that a licence was not extended, or in cases of shipwreck or piracy, chances were very good that it would become impossible to reclaim their outstanding debts. One of the most frequent complaints of merchants who lost their licence for a harbour or when the Danish king tried to limit the German presence in Iceland was that they suffered great losses because of their outstanding debts on the island. For example, Bremen merchant Carsten Bake, who was licenced with a different harbour every three years in the late sixteenth century, complained that he would suffer great losses if he was not able to continue trading in Iceland, as he still had many outstanding debts all over the island.[118] Permission to sail at least one more year to Iceland to reclaim the debts was requested frequently, but almost never granted.[119]

It is therefore difficult to imagine what the advantage of the credit system in the North Atlantic must have been for the German merchants. Their customers had the clear advantage of having access to a steady supply of foreign goods,

115 *AÍ* 2, 40; Þorláksson, "King and Commerce", 166.

116 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 1b: agreement between Jacob Thode and representatives of the bishop, 1 March 1543 (15430301HAM00); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 111; Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 168n50.

117 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): Request of Bernd and Henning Salefeld for a licence for Hellissandur or Ólafsvík, 13 February 1601 (16010213HAM00).

118 "ich auch [. . .] so woll bei westen alß suden und norden fast vielfaltige schulde außstehende habe, und dahero zu eußersten meinen vorderb kommen und gereichen worde, do ich so gar aller dieser handlung endtsetztet werden solte". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15930228BRE01).

119 One of the few exceptions was Margaretha, the wife of Lübeck mayor Bartholomeus Tinappel, who received permission to continue sailing to Iceland after Bartholomeus's death to reclaim the outstanding debts. See Sections 6.4.2 and 7.4.3.

even in bad years. For the merchants, the absence of a permanent settlement and the freedom of Icelanders to trade with other merchants made it difficult for them to use credit to eliminate foreign competition, as they had done in Bergen. As it was, the system putting great pressure on merchants to return every year made it challenging to cope with changing circumstances. A possible explanation for the merchants' use of a credit system is that the providing of more-favourable trading terms was a means to get a leg up on the competition (i.e. the English), although the extension of credit to customers did not prevent Icelanders from trading with other (German) merchants. However, as we have seen from the heritage of Vigfús Erlendsson, the English extended credit to Icelanders as well. Moreover, it is possible that German merchants in the early years had reasonable hopes that they could establish a permanent presence on the island, which would make it easier to manage a credit system to their advantage.

A more likely explanation for the widespread use of the credit system in the North Atlantic is that the Hanseatic merchants in Bergen had created a system that was self-sustaining and hard to abolish once it was in place. When customers came to pay their debts, they also expected to buy new commodities on credit. If they could not, they would simply go to someone else to trade. When Christian IV had announced the end of foreign trade in Iceland, the German merchants complained that it would be almost impossible to stop trading within a few years without great losses, as customers would not come to pay their debts if they were not able to buy new goods. It was therefore impossible to trade in Iceland without extending new credit to Icelanders.[120] It is likely that the credit system in the North Atlantic was slightly disadvantageous to the German merchants on the whole (especially when they could not continue their business), but that cutting out the *Kontor* from the transactions by trading directly with the stockfish producers provided enough advantages to compensate.

Although most sources about debts originate in Iceland, there is no reason to assume that the situation was different on the Faroe Islands. Indeed, Magnus Heinesen from Bergen and Joachim Wichman from Hamburg both received permission to sail one last time to the Faroes to reclaim their outstanding debts after their licences had ended (in 1588 and 1591, respectively), indicating that

120 "das auch fast unmöglich, fallen wurde, die schulde, welche nun soviell und lange jar doselbst im lande gemacht, also in eill von den armenn leuten heraußer zupreßen, und zubekommenn, bevorab wan sie vermercken wurden, das man keinen handell mehr im lande treiben, und ihnen also nichts mehr zufuhren, borgen, und furstrecken solte, und wolte". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Instruction for Johan von Affelen, 15 November 1601 (16011115BRE00).

the debt system was also in use there.[121] The same went for Thomas Koppen's widow Elisabeth after her husband's death in 1553.[122] Merchants in the Faroes might have enjoyed more benefits from the credit system than their colleagues in Iceland, as they faced less competition from other merchants and by extension greater control over their customers.

4.2.3 Credit in Shetland

In Shetland, the situation is less clear. According to Friedland, the credit system was in place in Shetland as well, but he gives no source for this statement, apparently assuming a parallel with Norway and Iceland.[123] If we look at the sources, we do indeed find many references to debts involving German merchants in Shetland. However, on closer inspection the evidence for a credit *system* like the one in Iceland is rather thin. A document from 1557 mentions that Bremen merchant Hinrick Sprenger bought a trading company in Shetland from Christoffer Meyer, which included the outstanding debts, and the same went for the sale of a Bremen trading company in 1572.[124] The *Court Book of Shetland* for the years 1602–1604 has a number of entries for German merchants who summoned their debtors – with the assistance of local landowners – to repay their debts: Herman Detken in Unst, Fetlar, and Yell in 1602; Herman Ertman, Johan ("Yaine") Bremer, and Herman Schneman ("Sueman") in the parish of Nesting, the latter also in the parishes of Aithsting and Sandsting in 1603; and Simon Harriestede ("Simone Hagerstay") from Hamburg in Northmavine and Magnus Detken ("Dicken") on behalf of Tonnies Schneman ("Diones Sueman") in Dunrossness in 1604.[125] Harriestede had been ordered to move from Northmavine to Papa Stour in 1602, which might be the reason for this entry.[126]

The references of Herman Detken and Herman Schneman suggest a similar situation as what the Icelandic account books indicate: there was much overlap

121 *KB* 1584–1588, p. 904; 1588–1592, p. 686.

122 *NRR* 1:162; Kohl, "Überseeische Handelsunternehmungen", 427n1.

123 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 77.

124 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: minute of the Bremen lower court, 14 May 1557 (15570514BRE00); testimony of the city council, 4 May 1575 (15750504BRE00).

125 *CBS 1602–1604*, 9, 12, 65, 80, 124, 153–154. In the last document, Magnus Detken is referred to as the son of Herman Detken and as being based in Uyeasound. This might imply that Herman retired from the Shetland trade, which might have been the reason for his call to his clients to repay their debts to him two years before.

126 See Sections 4.4.2 and 5.2.

between the coverage of trading sites and clients traded with multiple merchants. Detken was based in Uyeasound in Unst, but also had clients with outstanding debts on the islands of Yell and Fetlar. Schneman was in Laxfirth in Tingwall parish, and had clients with outstanding debts in neighbouring parishes. In all these areas, there were other trading stations as well (Figure 5.3). In one entry mentioning Herman Detken, it is even specified that his clients should repay their debts because they were also trading with others.[127] Although these references seem to suggest a credit system like the one in use in Iceland, it is hard to discern how widespread the use of credit was, given the fragmentary character of the evidence and the absence of surviving debt registers of German merchants in Shetland.

Furthermore, there are some distinct differences between the situations in Shetland and Iceland. First, all debts in Shetland involve money. While there are frequent allusions to barter trade in Shetland, (although the use of money did become more widespread during the seventeenth century), none of them involve debts.[128] In one instance from 1629, merchant Franz Brandt from Hamburg even provided a loan of 4000 Reichsthaler to Gilbert Mowat of Garth, which the latter had to repay in butter, oxen, and fish.[129] Indeed, the influx of hard currency brought by the German merchants to Shetland was seen as one of the advantages of the German trade, and the lack of this was lamented in the beginning of the eighteenth century, by which time the German trade with Shetland had largely ceased to exist.[130]

Second, credit was extended in both directions: not only were Shetlanders indebted to German merchants, German merchants bought goods on credit from Shetlanders as well, or possibly indebted themselves for the payment of customs.[131] The court books of Shetland from the first decades of the seventeenth century in particular regularly record unpaid debts in both directions, sometimes decades old. In 1617 for example, Margaret Wardis promised to pay the debts of her late husband, which went back to his dealings with Bremen merchant Dirick Voege ("Direk Feug") in Uyeasound many years earlier,[132] and in 1602, Lourence Tulloch in Skeldberrie sued Tonnies Schneman ("Dinneis

127 *CBS 1602–1604*, 9.
128 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 17–19.
129 *SD 1612–1637*, no.1234.
130 Alistair Goodlad, *Shetland Fishing Saga*, 1971, 71; Rössner, *Scottish Trade*, 120.
131 *SD 1580–1611*, no. 327: this lists debts of various German merchants for the payment of customs in guns to William Ballentyne, *tacksman* of Yell and Fetlar.
132 *CBS 1615–1629*, 51.

Sueman") from Bremen for paying by proxy a debt that Cordt Meyer had made with David Tulloch, Lourence's father, in 1578. Schneman's *maschop* partner was Johan Hemeling ("Yain Himmill"), who had inherited the debt from Meyer.[133] Moreover, various documents from the first decades of the seventeenth century are obligations of German merchants for sums of money owed to Shetlandic landowners that often do not specify the origin of the debt.[134] Most of the obligations that are specified concern the purchase on credit by German merchants of butter from the landowners, who had received this butter as tax from their tenants.[135] It is not surprising that the Germans received this butter on credit specifically from the landowners, since the latter were most likely to have the capital necessary to be able to extend credit.

Thirdly, the bulk of the evidence for credit in Shetland dates from the seventeenth century, which makes it difficult to assess the spread of the use of credit in Shetland in the previous century. While this might be due to a simple lack of sources, the seventeenth century did see changing circumstances in terms of trade, which might have impacted the use of credit by German merchants. Notably, the growth of trade that involved the use of currency, the rising importance of the landowners, and the ever-increasing customs and tolls might have made it easier and sometimes even unavoidable for German merchants to extend or receive credit.

For the sixteenth century, I can only conclude that although the use of credit was widespread, there is little evidence for the existence of a credit system like the one in Iceland, where customers would buy commodities on credit each year to be paid for in kind when the ships returned the next year. The salient difference here might be that the summer was the fishing season in Shetland, when the merchants were present.[136] In Iceland the fishing mainly took place in winter, when the merchants were not allowed to stay on the island, and fish could not be bought immediately after it was caught. It was this lack of control over the stockfish production that might have been one of the reasons for the prevalence of the credit system in Norway and Iceland, despite its flaws. It is, however, also possible that Shetlanders bought commodities on

133 *CBS 1602–1604*, 28.

134 *SD 1612–1637*, nos. 82, 83 (1613), 369 (1618; discharge thereof: no. 405), 1150 (1628), 1266 (1630).

135 *SD 1612–1637*, no. 1321 (1631); *CBS 1602–1604*, p. 15 (1602); *CBS 1615–1629*, p. 140 (1616); Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 60. See Section 2.3.

136 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 17.

credit from German merchants, but repaid them the same year; there is no way to prove this, however, due to a lack of sources, especially account books.

4.3 Networks

The use of credit in the North Atlantic, and especially the uncertain debt system in Iceland, where a customer could be indebted to more than one merchant at a time, made it all the more important to maintain a trust-based network with customers. Moreover, because there was not a permanent merchant presence on the islands, the flow of information between North Atlantic and German trading partners was far from reliable, putting even greater stress upon the establishment of trust to prevent both sides from deceiving each other.

The importance of these networks was noted by Bremen merchants in their complaint against the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in Iceland in November 1601:

> The Bremen citizens have become acquainted with the inhabitants of the districts belonging to the harbours to which they have sailed for many years, by their annual trading and enterprises, in such a way that they know each other very well, and that it is more convenient for [the Icelanders] to continue trading with acquaintances instead of starting new commerce with strangers, and also having to learn about their trading conditions, quality [of their commodities,] and facilities.[137]

In other words, it was better for the Icelanders to continue trading with the merchants with whom they already had a network, than with the Danes, of whom they did not know what to expect.

For the merchants themselves, a network of trusted customers provided security that debts would be repaid and that the quality of the stockfish was up to par. The importance of these networks was stressed by a clause in a 1572 *maschup* (trading company) contract from Bremen, in which it was specified that trading with strangers in Iceland on behalf of the company was not allowed without

137 "die Bremische burgere, mit den leuten, so zu denen von ihnen so viell jar lang besiegelten haffen gehörig, wie auch sie hinwiederumb mit den Bremischen durch jerliches contrahiren, und handelent sich allenthalben bekandt gemacht, also, daß der eine deß anderen gelegenheit erlernet, und kundig geworden, ob dan nicht denselben ihrer mayt. eigenen leuten, und unterthanen bequemer, und furträglicher, mit den bekanten ihre commercia, und handell zu continuieren, dan mit unbekanten ihre gewerb, unndt kaufmanschafft ufs neuw anzufangen, und zutreiben, ja auch gleich von neuwem deren condition, qualitet, und gelegenheit erst zuerforschenn". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Johan van Affelen, 15 November 1601 (16011115BRE00).

the explicit consent of the other participants.[138] In the following section, the structure of these networks will be analysed, and the various methods that the German merchants employed to build up and maintain their networks will be explored.

4.3.1 Providing services to customers

The German merchants employed different techniques to gain the loyalty of customers. As it was hard to compete with other merchants on price because prices for the most important commodities were fixed, they offered favourable trading conditions or other services. The testimonies of the clients of Bremen merchants around Berufjörður in 1590 and 1591 (Figure 4.5) list a few of these: they visited customers at home, because the latter lived too far away from the trading station; provided small boats to their clients with which the latter could fish and transport the fish; and generally brought commodities of good quality and did their best not to deceive the Icelanders.[139] No doubt these testimonies reflected the image that the merchants wanted to put forward of themselves, and their Hamburg competitors must have tried to maintain a network in the same fashion, although similar testimonies in favour of the Hamburg merchants are not known to exist.

The supplying of fishing boats is a curious element of these testimonies, as it had been one of the points of conflict between the German merchants with governors Otto Stigsen in 1545 and Lorentz Mule in 1547–1550, both of whom confiscated the fishing boats provided to the local population by German merchants.[140] The supplying of boats to fishermen is known from other regions, for example the herring fisheries in Scania, as a means of binding fishermen to merchants when they were officially free to trade with whomever they wanted.[141] In the

138 "besondern wolde he der marschup thom bestenn an gemelten örderen [i.e., Iceland], mit jemande frombdes handelen, solcket scholde mit der anderen frunde, so mede segelen, ohrem rade, wethen, willen, unnd fulborde geschehenn, unnd datsulvige denn frunden na gelegenheit tho willigen edder tho verbedenn fryg stahn". SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15720416BRE00). See also Section 7.2.1.

139 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16 and 18a): testimonies of Icelanders in support of Bremen merchants, August 1590 (15900000OST00, 15900812FUL00, 15900813FUL00, 15900820FUL00, 15900827FUL00, 15900829FUL00); SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Daniel Bisterfeld, 14 October 1590 (15901014BRE01); Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 204.

140 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 208–9; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 27; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 60; Þorláksson, "Frá landnámi til einokunar", 171; Þorsteinsson, "Island", 185. See Section 3.5.2.

141 Carsten Jahnke, *Das Silber des Meeres: Fang und Vertrieb von Ostseehering zwischen Norwegen und Italien 12.–16. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2000), 262–263.

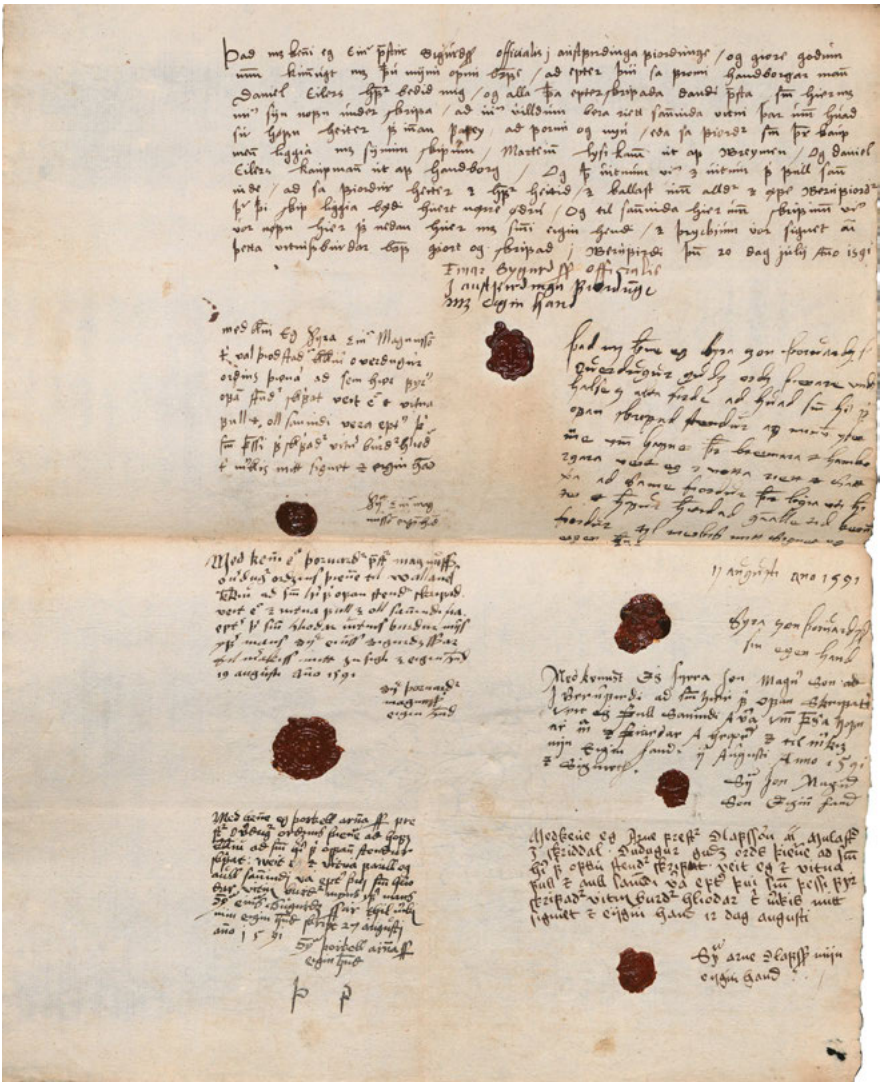

Figure 4.5: Testimonies in favour of Bremen merchants in Berufjörður, provided by their Icelandic clients, 1591. RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16).

North Atlantic, the strategy was widespread because of the great demand for boats due to the lack of timber on the islands. The Hamburg merchants are known to have supplied the boats to fishermen in Iceland on the condition that every fifth fish caught was given to the merchants, thereby establishing a kind of putting-out system.[142] This went against the interests of the *hausbunde*, the landowning farmers in whose service the fishermen worked, as they were circumvented by the system.[143] Despite the opposition from the Icelandic elite, German merchants seem to have contined the system to supply boats, as is attested by the testimonies in Berufjörður. Apparently, these boats could also be provided on credit. In October 1601 Hamburg merchants complained about the Danish trade monopoly by stating that they had supplied their customers with boats, and had to wait a couple of years before they were repaid.[144]

Both in the Hamburg quarrels with the governor in the 1540s and in the testimonies collected by the Bremen merchants in Berufjörður, the merchants defend their actions as serving the poor people in Iceland. This may have been mere rhetoric, though. Fishing activity was bound to the farm, which formed the central unit of Icelandic society, and it was tried to uphold this centrality of the farm. In the fifteenth-century *Búalög*, which set forth the duties and rights of farm servants, it was ordained that cottagers who did not own enough cattle for subsistence were not allowed to fish on their own account, but should be in the service of the landowners.[145] This regulation also appears in the *Píningsdómur* of 1490. The account books from Bremen and Oldenburg clearly indicate that a great many of the customers lived on farms close to the sea.[146] Although it is not possible to identify all of the persons mentioned, as Ólafur Ásgeirsson has attempted for the Oldenburg debt book, it is likely that the German merchants traded mostly with the landowners and not with their servants, who actually did the fishing; the list of customers includes many members of the local elite, such as parish priests and sheriffs.[147] The account book of Clawes Monnickhusen, which records the sales of much smaller amounts of commodities, might hint at trade with less-wealthy people, but it is more likely that this reflects the fact that

142 *DI* 11:340 (15450320KOL00).

143 In 1550, Hamburg merchants stated that Otto Stigsen had acted in the interest of the landowners when he confiscated the fishing boats, whereas the supplying of fishing boats by Hamburg merchants was beneficial to the poor people: *DI* 11:644 (15500000HAM00). See also Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 131.

144 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19); SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4 (16011029HAM00).

145 Gardiner, "Commercial Fishing", 87.

146 Gardiner, 86.

147 Ásgeirsson, "Verzlunarbók", 95–103.

the book only lists those indebted to Monnickhusen personally, and not the entire trading company, as is the case with the Oldenburg book. This is also suggested by the total volumes of commodities listed in both debt books (Table 2.1). It is likely that Monnickhusen's customers were also indebted to other merchants on the same ship.

4.3.2 The role of the winter stay

A key element in building up a trust-based network in Iceland was the winter stay on the island. As we have seen from Bergen, a permanent presence was a prerequisite for better control of the credit relations with the local population. Apart from that, the winter stay was also instrumental for young merchants in getting to know the language and culture of their future customers and in strengthening their ties with the Icelanders. The earliest mentions of the Icelandic trade reference winter stays, as for example that of Peter Dambeke from Danzig, who must have stayed in Iceland in the winter of 1432/33.[148] The example of Cordt Sten from Lübeck, who sent a ship to Iceland to find his brother in 1442, also suggests that the latter had stayed over winter.[149] However, with these early – probably exploratory – voyages, it is not always clear whether merchants had stayed over winter intentionally.

By 1468, the winter stay had become integral to conducting business in the north and was repeatedly prohibited by the authorities, although enforcement was problematic until the mid-sixteenth century. The donation register of the confraternity of St Anne separately lists *liggers* a couple of times until the 1540s, whom Ehrenberg interprets as synonymous with servants (*knechte*),[150] but it is likely this term refers more specifically to those servants who stayed in Iceland in winter. This is suggested for example by a document from 1532, where Lutke Schmidt is mentioned with his servants and also his *lantliggers*, who had stayed there in winter.[151] In 1549, the conflict between the Danish authorities and the German merchants about the winter stay in Iceland reached its peak when governor Lorentz Mule arrested five servants from Hamburg and

148 Forstreuter, "Hansische Islandfahrt", 114.

149 *UBL* 8:61; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 7; Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 12.

150 Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 24.

151 "Ludtken Schmidt mith alle synen folcke de he by sick hadde vppet schip vnd ock de lantliggers de den wynter ouer dar gelegen hadden". *DI* 16:287 (15320404XXX00).

Lübeck who had stayed in winter, and also fined the farmers at whose houses they were staying six *hundert* (=720) fish.[152]

It was probably common that German merchants stayed at the homes of their clients in winter, as the German literary sources about Iceland report. Dithmar Blefken[153] tells the story of merchant Cordt Blome, who stayed at the home of the bishop of Skálholt in the winter of 1561 "for conducting trade and learning the language",[154] where he acquired a narwhal tooth that was found in the drift ice.[155] Gories Peerse must have based his description of the habits of the Icelanders – although written with a sense for scandal – on his own experiences as merchant in Iceland. It is not inconceivable that he overwintered with an Icelandic family in his early career.[156]

The importance for the winter stay for young merchants is stressed by the exceptions made in the regulations for it. Where the *Píningsdómur* (1490) only made an exception for men who had been shipwrecked, the Althing verdict of 1527 did so for "young boys (*smadreingier*) who do not conduct business".[157] This was specified in the confirmation charter by German and English skippers and merchants of the Althing verdict of 1533, which exists in two versions with slightly different wordings. In the first version, there is an exception for "boys who want to learn the [Icelandic] language", and in the other version for those who desire to get to know the land and the habits of its people.[158] Although it was specifically prohibited to conduct trade in winter, the purpose of the winter stay for young merchants was undoubtedly to build up a network by staying with their Icelandic clients.

The exception must have been misused by merchants to trade secretly in winter, and evidently the authorities, who realised the necessity for young merchants to become acquainted with the Icelanders, sought to control the winter stay in other ways. Two 1572 documents granting Hamburg merchants Paul Holthusen and Jacob Lampe permission to stay in winter in Iceland to learn the

152 *DI* 11:628; *DI* 11:644 (15500000HAM00).

153 On the factual value of Blefken's account and his personal history, see Section 1.1.

154 "ab alio negotiandi causa et linguae discendae". Blefken, *Island*, 64–67.

155 See Section 2.5.

156 Seelmann, "Gories Peerse", 115–16, also believes that Peerse based his account on his own experience, but assumes that he misinterpreted some of the Icelanders' customs because he did not understand their language. This is, however, unlikely, as some understanding of the other's language must have existed among both parties.

157 "smadreingier þeir sem aunguan k(a)upskap hafa". *DI* 9:343 (15270702ISL00). See also Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 204–205.

158 "jungens die de sprake leren wyllenn"; "landeschop tho leren". DI 16:333 (15330630TIN00).

language suggest that young merchants needed to acquire written permission from the governor for the winter stay first.[159] In 1576, governor Johan Bockholt asked sheriff Eggert Hannesson in the Westfjords to punish Hans Boddeker from Hamburg, who had received permission to stay there to learn the language but had traded and exploited the population.[160]

Although it is impossible to determine how many merchants stayed on the island in winter, there are regular references to the practice until the end of the sixteenth century. In 1580, for example, the heirs of Bremen skipper Johan Munsterman, whose ship had wrecked the year before, complained that they still had many commodities and debts on Iceland, and that two servants who had been left there in winter did not know about the troubles and were waiting for the merchants' return in vain.[161] The winter stay of the Hamburg junior merchant Hinrik Kules in 1581/2 came to an exceptionally sad end, as he was accused of having stabbed Bjarni Eiríksson to death in Bessastaðir around Christmas. He was subsequently sentenced to death at the local thing in Kópavogur, and buried on the heath of Arnarnesheiði.[162]

Unlike in Iceland, the winter stay in Shetland was not prohibited, but there is hardly any evidence that it was undertaken. Although Friedland stated that Hamburg merchants regularly overwintered in Shetland,[163] there was less

159 *AÍ* 1:135–137.

160 *AÍ* 1:332–333.

161 "Dan wir in der have unsere heusere in volligem gebawte sthen, zu welchem einforderung unnd unsere schulde noch ausstehen haben, noch sween gesellen, die vor einem jahr up dar geblieben, unnd denen unsere ellende zustandt noch nicht wißend". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 12 April 1580 (15800412BRE00).

162 Friederike Christiane Koch, "Hinrik Kules, Hamburger Islandfahrer, † 1582 auf Island", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 2.2 (1996): 21–23, based on the records of the Kópavogur thing in the Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands, Reykjavík. Kules is recorded in the donation register of St Anne as *knecht* (junior merchant) on the ships of Joachim Valeman (to Hafnarfjörður) in 1575 and 1580–81, and of Bernd Salefeld (to Ríf) in 1578–79. His father with the same name was a skipper in Iceland in 1541–1547. For the thing site in Kópavogur, see Guðrún Sveinbjarnardóttir, *Rannsókn á Kópavogsþingstað* (Kópavogur, 1986), 11.

163 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 76. Friedland cites the years 1617 and 1625 from the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne, but it is not clear which entry exactly prompts his statement. In 1617, two donations are "for the current and the last year" (f. 495r: "vor duth und dat forige jhar"); in 1625, a merchant in Shetland is mentioned, and Hans Hasow also made a donation for the previous year (f. 524r: "Johan Gerdes kopman up Hitlandt vorehrett"; "Noch Hans Haßow van vorgangenem jhare, wegen der vorlaren reyse"). There might have been other reasons for a merchant to extend the payment of a donation for a year, such as shipwreck (as hinted upon in Hans Hasow's case) or financial problems. Friedland's statement about the winter stay must therefore be considered as merely a suggestion.

incentive for them to do so, as the fishing took place in summer rather than winter. If we assume that credit was not advanced to locals as commonly in Shetland as in Iceland, there was less need to control the debtors, and no advantage over competitors to being able to buy the fish before the latter arrived.

4.3.3 Islanders as passengers, guests, and crew members

Next to the winter stay of Germans in Iceland, Icelanders also used the frequent connections between northern Germany and their homeland to travel between the island and the European continent. Shipping connections with Hamburg and Bremen were more frequent than with Denmark, so that many Icelanders with business in Denmark travelled via Hamburg.[164] Moreover, Icelanders travelled to the continent for education or apprenticeship in Hamburg or to study at the universities of Rostock, Copenhagen, or Wittenberg. They probably did not take advantage of the shipping connections with Bremen as frequently due to its geographical location. There are references as well to Icelanders staying at the homes of Hamburg merchants while travelling. Finally, some even settled in Hamburg, married, and acquired property there.[165] These occasions must have provided plenty of opportunity to discuss business transactions or partnerships, or to maintain social ties between Germans and Icelanders.

An extensive analysis of the Icelanders using these shipping connections to sail to and from the European continent has been undertaken by Friederike Koch,[166] and I will limit myself here to one extremely well-documented example. The accounts of bishop Gizur Einarsson of Skálholt (1515–1548) give us detailed insight in his frequent travels and stays in Hamburg and his connections to the merchants with Iceland there.[167] Gizur must already have built up a network in Hamburg by the time he was sent to study there and later in Wittenberg by his mentor bishop Ögmundur Pálsson between 1531 and 1534. He returned to Hamburg in 1539 on his way to Copenhagen for a council

164 One such figure is the famous Icelandic scholar Arngrímur Jónsson, who travelled via Hamburg to Copenhagen in 1590. Bonde, *Hamburg und Island*, 12.

165 See Section 4.3.5.

166 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*.

167 Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, AM 232 8vo: Bréfabók Gissurar biskups Einarssonar, 1540–48. Most of these many documents have been published in *DI* 10.

concerning the resignation of the bishop. On the way back, he stayed in Hamburg again for the month of March 1540, at which occasion he was in close contact with burgomaster Meinert von Eitzen, skipper Peter Korner (who would take him to Hafnarfjörður), and merchants Hinrick Hintzke and Hans van Lubbeke (who would later deliver goods ordered by him to Iceland).[168] Two years later, in the winter of 1542/3, he sailed to Hamburg again to be confirmed as the new superintendent of Skálholt in Copenhagen. Afterwards he travelled to Rostock and Lübeck and returned to Hamburg, where he stayed 15 weeks at burgomaster von Eitzen's house. Here he paid old debts of bishop Ögmundur to the Hamburg merchants, bought a large amount of cloth from clothmaker Henrik Poek, visited the island Schrevenhof in the Elbe with Hinrick Hintzke and his wife and other Icelanders staying in Hamburg at that time, and bought various commodities before returning to Skálholt. His relationship with Hinrick Hintzke seems to have been especially close: in 1544 he wrote Hintzke to ask him to transport various commodities to Iceland, for which he paid 180 fish in advance, and sent gifts to various people, including Hintzke's and von Eitzen's wives.[169]

Finally, German merchants now and then employed (young) islanders as crew members on their ships. The donation register of the confraternity of St Anne lists three Icelanders who were hired as ship boys (*putker*) in the years 1575, 1585, and 1588 and one nameless Icelander who was the servant of merchant Cordt Blome in 1560, but it is impossible to find out more about these persons as they were not mentioned by name or only by their first name.[170] Along these lines, 13 Scottish crew members are identifiable on ships returning from Shetland to Hamburg, the first in 1593, the rest in the early decades of the seventeenth century.[171] For the Faroes, there are no names in the donation register that can be traced to a person of Faroese descent with some certainty.[172]

4.3.4 German barber-surgeons in Iceland

When considering the networks of German merchants in Iceland, it is also crucial to look at the role of barber-surgeons (*bartscherer*) in the Icelandic trade.

168 See also Section 6.2.1.

169 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 161–170.

170 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), ff. 168r, 244v, 336v, 337r; Koch, 53.

171 Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 86, 129–131.

172 See Piper, *Verzeichnis der Hamburger Färoerfahrer*.

At that time, barber-surgeons were among the few with a basic medical knowledge. Due to the dangerous activity of sailing a ship, they were often on board, and in the case of Iceland, where medical knowledge was limited, German barber-surgeons from the merchant ships served the local population as well.[173] This is specifically mentioned by the Bremen merchants in Nesvogur in 1585, who stated that they brought a barber-surgeon each year, who helped the inhabitants of Iceland with health problems.[174] The testimonies collected by Bremen merchants in Berufjörður in 1590 also mention the arrival of barber-surgeons on merchant ships as benefitting the local population.[175] The Hamburg merchants regularly took barber-surgeons with them as well: the donation register of the St Anne confraternity lists them 45 times (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Barber-surgeons in the donation register of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants in Hamburg.

f.	Year	Name	On the ship of	Harbour[a]
9r	1536	de bartscherer	Jacob Wencke	
10r	1536	Claes Otken	Marcus Fothe	
14v	1537	Matyes de Barscher	Herman Bruns	
22v	1539	Rotmert by dem bartscher	Hans Sydenborch	[Básendar]
24v	1540	Marten Molre	Jurgen vam Hagen	Hafnarfjörður
27v	1540	Hinrick Geners	Jochim Botman	
28r	1540	Hans de Barscheyrer	Hans Huge	[Ríf]
38r	1543	Jacob Bartscherer	Peter Korner	[Hafnarfjörður]
43v	1543	Henninck Meyer	Hans Meyer	[Eyjafjörður]
46v	1544	Jacob de bartscherer	Peter Korner	[Hafnarfjörður]
47r	1544	Alberth Groper	Hans Sydenborch	[Básendar]
48r	1544	de bartscherer	Hans Huge	[Ríf]
50v	1544	Pawel Perlmeyer	Albert Carstens	

173 Þorsteinsson, "Island", 181; Holterman, "Ship Crews"; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 101–102.

174 "nebenn deme das wir auch jederzeitt einen balbierer, auff unseren schiffe mitt inn Ißlandt geschicket, deßenn hulffe undt curation ihre kun. matt. unterthanen, welche daselbst mitt kranckheitt befallenn zu ihrem trost, undt notturfft auch zu genießen und zu gebrauchen haben". SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): request from Bremen merchants for a licence for Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður, 20 November 1585 (15851120BRE00).

175 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16 and 18a): testimonies of Icelanders in support of Bremen merchants, August 1590 (15900000OST00, 15900812FUL00, 15900813FUL00, 15900820FUL00, 15900827FUL00, 15900829FUL00).

Table 4.2 (continued)

f.	Year	Name	On the ship of	Harbour[a]
57v	1545	Albert Greppel	Hans Sydenborch	[Básendar]
59r	1545	Pauwel Polmeyer	Alert Frese	
64v	1546	Henninck Bartscherer	Jurgen vam Hagen	[Hafnarfjörður]
66v	1546	Clawes de bartscherer	Dirick Pineman	[Keflavík / Básendar]
68r	1546	de bartscherer	Herman Struckmeyer	
68v	1546	Berndt Frese	Meinert Frese	
72r	1547	Albert de bartscherer	Herman Struckmeyer	[Ríf]
74v	1547	Henninck de barscherer	Hinrick Berndes	
77r	1548	Bastian Mutenhusen	Peter Korner	[Hafnarfjörður]
77v	1548	de bartscherer	Dirick Pineman	[Keflavík]
86r	1549	Baltzer de bartscherre	Jurgen vam Hagen	[Hafnarfjörður]
125r	1554	de bartscher	Hans Smidt	[Básendar]
137r	1555	Henrik Gerkens	Hans Buneke	[Húsavík]
161v	1559	Daniel de bartscherer	Herman Varenhorst	[Ríf]
188r	1564	Hinrick Schmidt	Herman Struckmeyer	[Hafnarfjörður]
202v	1567	Hinrick Bartscherer	Jacob Berchman	
244v	1575	de bartscherer	Frederich Fox	[Ríf]
294v	1584	Mester Hans Bartscherer	Hans Temmerman	[Hafnarfjörður]
301r	1584	de barscherer	Gories Peerse	
340r	1588	Hans Saler	Hans Holtgreve	[Hafnarfjörður]
370r	1592	de balberer	Hans Holtgreve	[Hafnarfjörður]
382r	1594	Jochim Lange	Hans Jaspers	[Hafnarfjörður]
388r	1595	Jochim Lange	Joachim Hare	[Hafnarfjörður]
389r	1595	Johan Kröger	Hans Holtgreve	[Hafnarfjörður]
395r	1596	Johan de balberer	Hans Holtgreve	[Hafnarfjörður]
411r	1598	Peter Vicke	Laurens Swer	Keflavík
417v	1599	Jochim Lange	Joachim Hare	[Hafnarfjörður]
418v	1599	Peter Witte	Hans Holtgreve	[Hafnarfjörður]
427r	1600	Hans Olrickes	Lutke Rodewolt	Keflavík
435v	1601	M. Hans de balberer	Hans Moldenhouwer	Hafnarfjörður
436v	1601	Johan Francke	Lutke Rodewolt	Keflavík
444v	1602	Johan Gading	Peter Eckhoff	[Hafnarfjörður]

[a]Harbours in square brackets are not mentioned in the donation register, but are reconstructed from other sources.

Some of these barber-surgeons traded themselves. An example is Bremen merchant Christoffer Meyer, who claimed in 1591 that he had been sailing to Iceland for 53 years, first as a barber-surgeon and later as a

merchant.[176] This commercial activity might be the reason that barber-surgeons were also subjected to stricter regulations in the 1540s. It was decided at the Althing in 1545 that they were only allowed to be active in Iceland by special permission of the governor, and that they were not allowed to trade.[177] At the same time (1544), in Hamburg barber-surgeons sailing to Iceland became controversial and were prohibited from engaging from medical activity there, probably because they provided unwanted competition, after the ships returned in autumn, for those who remained in the city and did not travel.[178]

This competition might have been the reason why some barber-surgeons chose to settle in Iceland. During an outbreak of syphilis in Iceland in 1525, bishop Ögmundur Pálsson took German barber-surgeon Lazarus Matthiasen in his service, who settled in Iceland and married an Icelandic woman.[179] The story of Henrik Gerkens from Hamburg is similar: he came to Iceland in 1555, received permission from governor Paul Stigsen to stay in Iceland for the rest of his life in 1562, married an Icelandic woman, and held various offices in northern Iceland (Húnavatnsþing, Strandasýsla). He also came from a merchant family: his father Hans is attested in the records of the confraternity of Scania merchants in Hamburg. Moreover, his son Hannes remained in close contact with the Hamburg merchants in Hafnarfjörður: in 1595, he donated to the confraternity.[180]

4.3.5 Family connections with islanders

Naturally, during the long trading history of German merchants in the North Atlantic, Germans and Icelanders developed relations that went beyond the commercial realm. Dithmar Blefken described the tendency of Icelanders to take their unmarried daughters to the trading stations in the hope of coupling them with a German, because it was considered an honour for Icelandic women to have a child by a German.[181] Blefken's statement was no doubt an exaggeration if not completely false, and served to promote an image of promiscuity of the Icelandic

176 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 1591 testimonies of old Bremen *Islandfahrer* (15901203BRE00).
177 *DI* 11:367 (15450630TIN00).
178 Rüdiger, *Zunftrollen*, 16–17.
179 *DI* 9:262; Þorsteinsson, "Island", 181; Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 124.
180 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 195–198.
181 Blefken, *Island*, 42–43.

people, as it was contrasted with the peoples around the Red Sea, who sewed together the labias of their daughters to presserve their virginity until marriage.

However, it is hard to imagine that the great annual influx of German men on the island, who stayed there for months, did not lead to sexual relations between Germans and Icelanders. This has for example been shown for Bergen, where relations with local women were prohibited on the penalty of exclusion from Hanseatic privileges, but seem to have been seen as a necessary evil and were tolerated to some extent.[182] Similarly, relations with Icelandic women, both married and single, were explicitly prohibited in the 1572 permits for German merchants to stay in winter.[183] However, on a more official level, there are some references of marriages between Germans and Icelandic women, including the barber-surgeons mentioned above.[184] This also worked in the other direction. Friederike Koch identifies 135 Icelanders who travelled to Hamburg in the period 1520–1662, 16 of whom settled in the city and married into local families.[185]

Sometimes Icelanders married into the families of German merchants. One example is Konráð Jónsson, who settled as Conradt Johansen in Hamburg in 1580 and became a merchant there, trading between Hamburg and Iceland. He married Margaretha, the daughter of Hans von Kleve, who was Konráð's trading partner in his home region Barðastrandasýsla for many years.[186] Another example is Eggert Hannesson, the sheriff of the Westfjords, who was also active in the trade with Hamburg. He sent his son Jón Eggertson, who was accused of manslaughter, to Hamburg in 1570 on the ship of merchant Arndt Hesterberch. In Hamburg, Jón married Hesterberch's daughter Anna.[187] Eggert Hannesson would settle in Hamburg in 1580 himself, and marry Armgard, the widow of Arndt Hesterberch (who had died in the meantime), i.e. the mother-in-law of his son.[188]

182 Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*, 143–148.

183 "ferner da sich vielgem^{n} Jacob Lampe irgennt in unleidlicher unnzucht irgent mit begebenen frauwen oder auch sonnst mit unbegebenen verscheen vürde, sol ehr auch gleicher gestalt ann der konn: Mayst verfallen, und lauth der Jslendischenn Rechte gestrafft werden". *AÍ* 1:136–137:

184 For example Hamburg merchants Joachim Griep, Johan Mumme, and Reinholt Olrickes married Icelandic women. Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 60n259.

185 Koch, 360.

186 Koch, 242.

187 Koch, 214–216. After Jón's death in *c*.1586–88, Anna married Richard Frese, a member of the Hamburg society of Scania merchants. He appears once in Iceland, on the ship of Marcus Qwast in 1599: SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), ff. 420r, 424r.

188 Koch, 128–136; Friederike Christiane Koch, "Die Rentebrief-Eintragungen aus den Jahren 1572–1600 über den isländischen Lögmaður Eggert Hannesson in den Kämmereirechnungen der Stadt Hamburg", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 8.2 (2002): 49–52.

Marriage in both directions strengthened the ties between German and Icelandic families, even before the direct trade with the North Atlantic. The already mentioned testament of Lübeck merchant Hermen Witstock in Bergen from 1429 not only records debts with Icelanders, Shetlanders, and Faroese, but also that his daughter was married to Gudmunder Niclawessone, possibly an Icelander.[189] The family networks in this way could include many persons from different locations involved in the Icelandic trade. Luder Ottersen, for example, the Danish factor in Lübeck who was active in various harbours in Iceland, married the daughter of Copenhagen burgomaster Simon Surbeck, who had been enfeoffed with the Vestmannaeyjar. Their son Cordt was active as merchant in Hamburg and married an Icelandic woman, with whom he had a son Þorleifur, who held various offices in Iceland in the seventeenth century.[190]

For the other islands, there are only hints at the possible existence of family connections with the local population. A testament from 1540 of Bremen skipper Wichman Bruns mentions ten mark that were to be given to "the foreign child from Shetland", who was taken care of by a certain Gerhardus, a Franciscan monk in Bremen. Although it is not known who this foreign child was, its appearance in the testament makes it likely that it was in some way related to Bruns, who probably sailed to Shetland regularly, given the many names of Shetland merchants among the document's witnesses.[191] Moreover, in 1602 the Shetland court books record a penalty for "Margarete Erasmusdochter, adulterix with Derik the Dutcheman".[192]

In the Faroes, a heritage from 1403 of Gudrun, the daughter of Sigurd nicknamed "hialtt", included both the settlement Húsavík on the Faroese island of Sandoy (Figure 5.4) and the buildings of Finngården in Bryggen in Bergen (Figure 3.2: Finngården is located on the far right of the row of houses lining the waterfront). The nickname "hialtt" suggests a Shetland origin, but the connection with Bryggen and the German merchants there has led to suggestions that the "lady of Húsavík" was of German descent.[193] Moreover, it has been suggested that Herman Reinicke, a merchant who had taken advantage of the political instability during the Count's Feud to attempt to trade in the Faroes by claiming that Thomas Koppen's licence had been issued by an illegitimate king, settled in the Faroes afterwards and started a family. At least from 1584

189 Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 61 no. 88.

190 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 356–359.

191 "dem elende kynde uth Hitlande". Hofmeister, "Sorgen eines Bremer Shetlandfahrers", 51.

192 *CBS 1602–1604*, 22.

193 Mortensen, "Økonomisk udvikling", 101–102; Young, *Chronicle of the Faroe Islands*, 95.

onwards, a Reinicke Hermansen (possibly his son) is named as a farmer in Kollafjørður (Figure 5.4).[194] Finally, there are references to the escapades of Joachim Wullenwever in the Faroes in the 1520s–1530s. He was accused of having appropriated goods in 1521 that were intended for the king, as they had been paid as fine by a woman who had killed a child and had been accused of having had an affair with Wullenwever.[195] Moreover, the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne mentions a certain Oleff Wullenwever on a ship returning from the Faroes in 1556. The Scandinavian name Oleff was not common in Hamburg at the time, and he only appears once in the register. Although difficult to prove, it is not impossible that this was a Faroese son of Joachim Wullenwever who moved to Hamburg in his early twenties.

4.3.6 Islanders as trading partners

In some cases, some islanders went from being customers to trading partners as merchants or part shipowners in the German *maschup*s or other merchant companies.[196] We know about such partnerships only from the last decades of the sixteenth century, but it is likely that they existed before, as the relations between foreign merchants, local authorities, and especially church officials were already close in English and Norwegian times.[197]

Our knowledge of these partnerships is largely taken from records of Icelanders who settled in Hamburg and integrated into the city's society while maintaining contact with their homeland. One example is Eiríkur Árnason, who was sheriff of Múlaþing in the Eastfjords and administrator (*klausturhaldari*) of the secularised monastic property in Skriðuklaustur (1564–1578) (Figure 6.1). A testimony from 1575 attests that he had trading contacts with both Bremen and Hamburg merchants in Berufjörður, and had access to the trading booth in the harbour when the Germans were not there.[198] After 1579,

194 Degn, *Nøkur gomul, áður óprentað brøv*, 21–23; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 176n1. The document that mentions Reinicke, a 1535 letter from the Faroese governor and lawmen to King Christian III, does not mention from which town Reinicke came, but it is likely that he was also from Hamburg. His accomplices Hans Løss (Loes) and Hans Seyenborg (Sydenborch) were probably from Hamburg, as they show up in the confraternity's donation register, the latter as a skipper to Iceland in the 1540s.

195 Lappenberg, "Joachim Wullenwever", 113. See Section 3.6.

196 See Section 7.2.

197 See Section 4.5.

198 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: testimony of Eiríkur Árnason, Skriðuklaustur, 6 August 1575 (15750806SKR00).

he withdrew from his offices and must have focussed on trading. A year later, he was accused by Bremen merchants of having helped Hamburg merchants acquire a licence to trade in Berufjörður in return for a share of ship ownership, and indeed he is attested in the Hamburg donation register for the years 1583–1585. In these years he settled in Hamburg, where he acquired property and married into a local family; he died there in late 1586.[199] A late sixteenth or seventeenth-century Bartmann jug (Figure 4.6) of Rhenish stoneware found during earthworks at the site of the farmhouse in Skriðuklaustur reminds us of Eiríkur's involvements with the German traders.

Figure 4.6: Bartmann jug from the late sixteenth or seventeenth century, found in Skriðuklaustur. Given the dating after the secularisation of the monastery, it most likely belonged to one of its administrators. Photograph courtesy of Skúli Björn Gunnarsson.

An example of more thorough integration among the Hamburg merchants is the already mentioned Konráð Jónsson, who was from a family in the Icelandic

199 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 150–151. See Section 6.6.3.

Westfjords and moved to Hamburg with sheriff Eggert Hannesson in 1580, aged around twenty. A year earlier, Eggert himself had acquired a licence for Dýrafjörður, and it could be that Konráð acted as his agent in Hamburg. From that year onwards, he is attested each year as Conradt Johansen in the donation register of the Hamburg confraternity (except 1584) on the ships to the Westfjords, on which he probably acquired a share in the late 1590s, and often donated to the confraternity, even after the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly.[200] Partnerships with Icelanders were not limited to Hamburg, though. Páll Jónsson (nicknamed Staðarhóls-Páll), sheriff of Barðaströnd, administrator of Þingeyrarklaustur, Húnavatnsþing, and Stranda- and Ísafjarðarsýsla from the 1560s onwards, acquired a trading licence for the harbour Flatey in 1589, for which he declared that he was partnering with a certain Björn Jonsson from Bremen. The licence was later given to the latter, who cannot be identified, however.[201]

The constant exchange between Germany, Denmark, and Iceland led to sometimes complex biographies of the central figures, who had close ties across these regions. A prime example is Ólafur Bagge, who was from a Norwegian family and became bailiff in the service of the governor in Bessastaðir in 1566. His frequent and large donations to the confraternity in Hamburg in the years 1580–1600 suggest that he was working closely together with the Hamburg merchants in Hafnarfjörður; he also bought various annuities in Hamburg. After 1600 he settled in Malmö as a merchant, but returned to be a bailiff in Iceland three years later. During this time, he remained in frequent contact with the Hamburg merchants, and was tasked with taking care of the claims for the outstanding debts of Hamburg merchant Hans Heins in Hvalfjörður in 1606.[202]

For the Faroes, there are no clear partnerships with the inhabitants, except if one counts Magnus Heinesen, a Bergen merchant whose father had been priest in Streymoy between *c*. 1530 and 1566 (and was from Bergen as well), as Faroese. Magnus acquired the right to trade in the Faroes in 1579, and was required to form a partnership with Joachim Thim, the Danish factor in Hamburg, and Copenhagen merchants until 1586.[203]

200 Koch, 238–242. Konráð married the daughter of Hamburg merchant Hans von Kleve; see Section 4.3.5.

201 Koch, 271; Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 150. See Section 6.3.7.

202 *KB* 1603–1608, 422–423; Koch, 253–254; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 78.

203 *KB* 1580–1583, 381–382; Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, nos. 165, 166; Degn, *Nøkur gomul, áður óprentað brøv*, 34–35; Debes, *Føroya søga*, 177–179. Thim and Heinesen might have been brothers-in-law: see Section 3.6 footnote 333.

Many Shetlandic records from the early seventeenth century, especially the court books, shed light on the cooperation between Shetlanders and Germans as trading partners. In one instance in 1601, a debt is mentioned for taxes owed to William Ballentyne of Garsay, tacksman on Yell and Fetlar, by Orne Nebebak, a landowner in Burravoe and "that mascope".[204] *Mascope* or *maschup* is a Low German word for a certain form of trading company, which was the dominant organisational form in the sixteenth-century North Atlantic trade.[205] The use of this term suggests that Orne Nebebak was partnering with German merchants (probably from Bremen), who are known to have been active in Burravoe and other places on Yell. This also makes sense in the context of the document, which goes on to list customs debts of German merchants. Significantly, a testimony about the debts of Bremen merchant Luder Brummer, written on the ship of Segebad Detken in Shetland in 1585, lists an "Arendt Neiback" among the witnesses, probably Orne Nebebak.[206]

We find more indirect evidence for trading partnerships between Shetlanders and German merchants in the many instances in which Shetlanders acted as cautioners or procurators for German merchants in the case of debts or other legal problems, often in their absence. For example, in 1602 landowner William Bruce of Symbister was cautioner for Gerdt Hemeling, who had to appear at court because he had something to do with the murder of Matthew Sinclair. The following year, Robert Scollay summoned the inhabitants of the parish of Aithsting and Sandsting to repay their debts on behalf of Herman Schneman, a German merchant in Laxfirth.[207]

In the course of the seventeenth century, as Scottish trade with Hamburg and Bremen intensified and Scottish merchants settled in those cities, the German merchants trading with Shetland seem also to have used these connections in conducting business. One particularly interesting case is that of Bremen merchant Cordt Warneke, who wrote to William Stirling in Edinburgh in March 1640 that he had bought 500 Reichsthaler worth of butter in Shetland from George Sinclair of Rapnes (Orkney) the previous summer, and had paid the money in November 1639 to Joshua Averie, the secretary of the

204 *SD 1580–1611*, no. 327.
205 See Section 7.2.1.
206 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: 16 August 1585 (15850816BRE00).
207 *CBS 1602–1604*, 31, 80.

Merchant Adventurers in Hamburg. Averie was to give the money to Stirling, who was supposed to pass it on to Sinclair and his partner Andrew Smith.[208]

4.4 Relations with the local authorities

As shown by the examples above, local authorities on Iceland were sometimes involved in trade as well and partnered with the German merchants. As has been noted for Bergen, good relations with local authorities were of vital importance for the smooth functioning of the credit system, most notably in the case of problems with debtors repaying their debts. This goes for Iceland as well, where the less-dependent position of debtors and the licence system put extra stress on the relations with the local authorities. The following section will analyse the sometimes-complex relations between the various actors, which blurred the boundaries between regions of origin and the roles of merchants and of political and legal office-holders.

4.4.1 Iceland

The central governing institution in Iceland was the Althing, an annual assembly of the chieftains and free men of the country, which met in Þingvellir in late June. It served as a legislative organ and court (called *lögrétta*, which consisted of the 36 most important officials on the island, *lögréttamenn*), and was presided by two lawmen (*lögmenn*). After the annexation of Iceland by Norway in 1262, and with the growing power of the Danish crown, the Althing gradually became just a law court and had little legislative power. However, it remained the central institution where new policies from Denmark were announced and where the sometimes-conflicting interests of the local elites, foreign merchants, and the Danish authorities were discussed.[209]

In many instances throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, German merchants appeared at the Althing to discuss conflicts with other foreign traders or with the local authorities. It is not known whether foreign merchants were present at the Althing when governor Didrick Pining set forth the

208 NRS GD190/3/234: letter from Bremen, 18 March 1640; cf. Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 87, who interprets its contents differently. See also Zickermann, 114–126 for the networks of German and Scottish merchants in Bremen and Hamburg in the seventeenth century.
209 Sigurðsson, "The Making of a 'Skattland'", 202–206; Júliússon, *Provincial State*, 263–265.

regulations for foreign trade in the *Píningsdómur* (1490),[210] but in later years they can be attested on various occasions. In 1527, the measures and weights and the regulations for the foreign trade were confirmed at the Althing in the presence of seven merchants and skippers from Hamburg, one from Bremen, and two from England. The foreigners were not there simply as witnesses; the wording of the document makes it clear that it was produced at their behest.[211] The document was confirmed by the governor and the merchants as well in Hafnarfjörður on 3 July.[212] Hafnarfjörður was the closest harbour to both the royal farm in Bessastaðir, the residence of the Danish governor, and to Þingvellir, as well as being the central trading place for the Germans in Iceland.[213] It might therefore be assumed that these ten merchants represented the foreign traders in Iceland. Nevertheless, the document did not help much in terms of guaranteeing good relations between the foreign merchants: in 1533, German and English merchants were present at the Althing again to restore the peace between them in Iceland after the negotiations in Segeberg.[214]

Although the merchants had some freedom to deal with debtors as they saw fit, with support of the local authorities, the Althing could also be a place of last resort for settling problems with recalcitrant debtors. In 1584, a penalty of 20 percent of the debt was confirmed for debtors paying their debts too late, on request of Hamburg merchants. Apparently debt problems had risen to such a level that they found it necessary to ask the Althing to reiterate this old penalty.[215]

The Danish king exercised political control over Iceland through the office of the governor (*hirðstjóri*, also called *höfuðsmaður* in the sixteenth century, or in Danish *befalingsmand,* hence usually called *bevelichebbere* or *hovetman* in German sources). He was the official representative of the king in Iceland. Initially he had received the country as a fief, but from the end of the fourteenth century, he received part of the king's revenue.[216] Although the offices of the lawmen were usually held by Icelanders, the office of governor was more and more occupied by foreigners as time went by. In the sixteenth and seventeenth

210 The document itself does not mention merchants being present in Þingvellir: *DI* 6:617 (14900701TIN00).

211 *DI* 9:343B, C (15270702ISL00); Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 19–20.

212 *DI* 9:343A (15270702ISL01). See also Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", for a detailed analysis, albeit with many assumptions, of the document.

213 See Section 6.2.6.

214 *DI* 16:333 (15330630TIN00).

215 *AÍ* 2:40. See Section 4.2.2.

216 Imsen, "Royal Dominion", 53, 59–61; Sigurðsson, "The Making of a 'Skattland'", 209–212; Júliússon, *Provincial State*, 247.

centuries, the governor was usually a Danish navy officer who did not always reside in Iceland. His place was then taken by the bailiff or steward (*fógeta*).[217] Here it should be remarked that the German translation of the term, *vogt*, was used to refer to all kinds of political offices on Iceland, not just for the bailiff.

The governor or his representative was most commonly the local authority on Iceland with whom foreign merchants came into conflict, as the spark was usually the implementation of Danish policies. Once again, the Althing was where these disputes were resolved in Iceland (after they had been negotiated in Denmark in winter). When the Danish authorities tried to enforce the prohibition of the winter stay in Iceland in the 1540s, German merchants appeared at the Althing twice: in 1545, after governor Otto Stigsen had confiscated fishing boats,[218] and in 1550, after governor Lorentz Mule had confiscated commodities from German merchants and arrested the servants who had stayed in winter.[219]

Most of the times, however, relations with the governor were peaceful, as there existed a certain mutual dependency between the German merchants and the Danish authorities. This was most clear in the 1520s and 1530s, 1532 especially, when German merchants helped the bailiff take action against the English for their unlawful behaviour by assisting him in an attack on an English ship in Grindavík.[220] And in 1521, the council of Hamburg assisted governor Hannes Eggertsson in his dispute with the former governor Tyl Pétursson from Flensburg, who refused to resign, by supplying the testimony of skippers Hinrick Horneman and Hinrick Vaget. Both Hamburgers had been present at the Althing the year before, when an agreement between Eggert and Tyl was made.[221] The governors were also often dependent on the Hamburg ships for their travel to and from the continent, as the same episode shows. Hannes Eggertsson wrote a letter from Hamburg in 1522, indicating that he travelled via that city to plead his case at the Danish court.[222] The frequent use of these connections is visible in the donations of officials on the ships returning from Hafnarfjörður in the Hamburg register. Although it is debatable whether a donation necessarily meant that one sailed on the ship, often these entries can be connected to other documents proving the presence of these persons in Hamburg in that year, especially in the later sixteenth century. Listed as donating often to the confraternity are, among others, governor Johan

217 Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 93–94; Júliússon, *Provincial State*, 265.
218 *DI* 11:367 (15450630TIN00).
219 *DI* 11:658 (15500630TIN00). Low German translation in SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2.
220 See Section 3.3.
221 *DI* 8:584; Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 186–187.
222 *DI* 9:183; see Koch, 187n12.

Bockholt (1570–1587; 1597–1602), lawman Jón Jónsson in western Iceland (1573–1606),[223] the Althing secretary Guðmundur Þórðarson (1593–1600),[224] and the already mentioned bailiff Ólafur Bagge, who was also active as a merchant.

One last important office in Iceland was that of the *sýslumaður*, or sheriff, the ruler of an administrative unit called *sýsla*, which was a common administrative division in late medieval Scandinavia. The sheriff received a portion of the revenues (fines, tolls, or taxes) of his district, and was responsible for daily governance. This included meeting with foreign merchants, with whom he set the trade when they arrived in the harbours in spring, and ensuring they did not act against the rules.[225] It was not uncommon for the same person to hold this office as well as another, e.g. that of lawman or steward.[226] These persons were also often merchants in their own right, or were important clients due to their position as landowners. We have already encountered the sheriffs Eiríkur Árnason in the east and Eggert Hannesson in the west, who cooperated with Hamburg merchants, and the heritage of sheriff Vigfús Erlendsson of Rangárþing in 1521,[227] which lists debts to seven German merchants. Before the king took over the sulphur trade in 1561, the mines near Mývatn in the north were owned by the family of the local sheriff, who sold the sulphur to the foreign traders.[228]

German merchants were not only dependent on local authorities in case of conflict with their Icelandic customers, but they also needed their support in case of a conflict with other merchants about the use of a harbour, or for the acquisition of a licence for a harbour which had not been in use before. In 1580, for example, in the dispute between Bremen and Hamburg merchants about the use of the harbour Berufjörður in the east, Hamburg merchant Matthias Eggers suggested bringing the case before the governor, the official with the highest authority to adjudicate in such a matter.[229] In various cases, local officials took the side of merchants in disputes or when they were trying to acquire licences, with the

223 Koch, 225.

224 Koch, 179–180.

225 For example, in 1567 sheriff Eiríkur Árnason of Múlasýsla declared that he had set the trade with the Bremen merchants in Berufjörður, and complained that the (Lübeck) merchants in Vopnafjörður were exploiting the local population. RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15670821SKR00).

226 Sigurðsson, "The Making of a 'Skattland'", 196–198; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 93–94; Júliússon, *Provincial State*, 262, 266.

227 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 351.

228 *DI* 14:133; Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 197.

229 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: answer of Matthias Eggers to complaints from Bremen, 27 February 1580 (15800227HAM00).

argument that the local population was not sufficiently supplied with commodities. In 1590, sheriff Björn Gunnarsson of Múlasýsla backed Bremen merchant Bernd Losekanne and skipper Johan Oldenbuttel against their Hamburg competitors in the area, and the next year his successor Erlendur Magnússon did the same.[230] Sheriff Vigfús Þorsteinnsson expressed his support for Joachim Focke in Þórshöfn in the Northeast in 1595,[231] as did lawman Jón Jónsson of western Iceland for Ratke Timmerman in Skagaströnd in 1586[232] and Johan Holtgreve in Álftafjörður in 1599.[233] In 1600, governor Johan Bockholt helped Hamburg merchants acquire a licence for Hvalfjörður, which he argued was too far from Hafnarfjörður for the inhabitants to travel to the latter harbour.[234] Even when officials did not explicitly offer their support, German merchants were keen to express their good relations with the sheriffs, lawmen, and governors, for example when they complained about the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in 1601.[235]

Furthermore, a good relationship with the local authorities was vital for the protection of the property left behind in winter. It has already been mentioned that sheriff Eiríkur Árnason had access to the merchant's booth in Berufjörður in winter. In the same fashion, merchants from Stade complained in 1578 that they were not able to sell all of their commodities in Iceland, and had to leave some of them behind with sheriff Eggert Hannesson.[236]

4.4.1.1 Germans as office-holders in Iceland

Another way to influence the situation on the island was for Germans to be appointed as officials in Iceland. This was not a rare occurrence, as many Germans were in the service of the Danish crown. The most famous of these is governor

230 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16 and 18a): 26 May 1590 (15900526FUL00), 25 August 1591 (15910825GET00). Regardless of their support for the Bremen merchants, both men sailed – probably with Hamburg merchants – to Hamburg the next year, where Erlendur Magnússon also died in 1598. Koch presumes that he was on his way to England to discuss the illegal presence of English merchants in the Eastfjords. Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 122, 154.

231 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9): 30 July 1595 (15950730HAG00).

232 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25): list of harbours licensed to Hamburg (15860213HAM00).

233 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): 29 August 1599 (15990829THI00).

234 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8): overview of licensed harbours, 1601 (16010000XXX00).

235 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): 29 October 1601 (16011029HAM00).

236 "ihrer gueter, so sie eingeladen unnd ins landt gefuhret, eine zimbliche menge ahn meehl, bier kramgudt, wandt und leinewandt nicht verhandeln konnen, sondern uns zu mercklichem großen schaden unnd nachtheil, etzlichs im landt bei dem voigt Eggerdt Hansen lassen, auch etzlichs wiederumb mit sich aus dem lande fuhren mussen". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15780120STA00).

Didrick Pining, who attached his name to the first document regulating the foreign trade in Iceland, the 1490 *Píningsdómur*. A native of Hildesheim, he served the Danish crown as an admiral and explorer, as did another German, Hans Potthorst.[237] From 1477 onwards, Pining appears in sources as governor of Iceland, first together with Þorleifur Björnsson, the son of governor Björn Þorleifsson who had been killed by the English in 1467. In 1481, the Norwegian Council of the Realm deposed Pining in favour of Þorleifur,[238] but Pining very soon after became the only governor with help of his Hildesheim nephew with the same name, who acted as bailiff.[239]

As governor, he seems to have acted against the English presence, about which Icelanders complained in 1484.[240] Together with regulating the trade conditions in 1490, his actions were instrumental in strengthening the position of German traders relative to that of the English. It is unknown whether his German descent had something to do with this, although Oswald Dreyer-Eimbcke suspects that the appointment of a foreigner to the office of governor, which was theoretically only open to Icelanders, had to do with Danish attempts to limit English influence in Iceland. Pining did have a long record of service to the Danish crown as an admiral, and had probably fought in the Anglo-Danish war that resulted, in part, from the killing of governor Björn Þorleifsson in 1468–1472.[241] Another reason to suspect that he was cooperating closely with the German traders in Iceland was his removal from office in 1581 at the hands of the Norwegian royal council, who fervently opposed German trade in Iceland. Shortly afterwards, the council also tried to prohibit Hanseatic trade with Iceland by way of enforcing the Bergen staple.[242]

237 Very little is known about the background and early career of Pining and Potthorst and the nature of their work in Danish service. It was claimed in the scholarship of the early twentieth century that they discovered the American continent on their travels in the 1570s: Sofus Larsen, *The Discovery of North America Twenty Years before Columbus* (Copenhagen, 1925); Heinrich Erkes, "Ein Deutscher als Gouverneur auf Island und Mitentdecker Amerikas 20 Jahre vor Columbus", *Mitteilungen der Islandfreunde* 16, no. 4 (1929): 83–86. The evidence for this is questionable, however. See Oswald Dreyer-Eimbcke, "Ein Deutscher als Statthalter auf Island", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 9.1 (2003): 67.

238 *DN* 9:915.

239 Dreyer-Eimbcke, "Deutscher als Statthalter", 68–69.

240 *DI* 7:12; Bonde, "Didrik Pining", 73.

241 Dreyer-Eimbcke, "Deutscher als Statthalter", 68; Ludvig Daae, "Didrik Pining", *Historisk tidsskrift*, 1882, 234.

242 *DN* 3:931; *DI* 6:363; *HR* III, 1, no. 351 (14810912BER00). See Section 3.5.1.

For Hans Potthorst at least, a direct connection with Hamburg is attested, as he was skipper and privateer in service of the city council in 1472/73, member of the society of Flanders merchants in 1473–1477, and was married to the daughter of a Hamburg councillor.[243] Moreover, he was active in the Icelandic trade himself. In 1477, he was aboard a Hamburg ship sailing with a cargo of stockfish from Iceland to London that ran aground on the Yorkshire coast and was robbed by English knights.[244] It has been suggested that Potthorst was in Danish service in Iceland after 1477 together with Pining, but there seems to be no evidence to support this, nor for the suggestion that Pining himself had connections in Hamburg.[245]

A clear example of a German office-holder who exerted substantial influence is Didrick van Minden, bailiff in Bessastaðir under various governors in the 1530s. Among others, he was instrumental in leading the punitive expedition of German merchants against the English in Grindavík in 1532.[246] He was the brother of Cordt van Minden, one of the Hamburg merchants in nearby Hafnarfjörður, but this does not mean that he always acted in the interests of his fellow countrymen. After all, he was also responsible for the attack on the monastery Viðey in 1539 in the course of Danish attempts to secularise the monastic property in Iceland, an action that led to his death at the hands of the bishop's men in Skálholt. The Hamburg merchants were quick to express their neutrality in this case, fearing that involvement in the matter would damage their commercial interests.[247] However, there are also some cases of German merchants who were appointed to

243 Hildegard von Marchtaler, "Hans Pothorst, einer der Frühentdecker von Amerika, und seine Hamburger Verwandtschaft", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 58 (1972): 83–85.

244 *HUB* 10:526.

245 Marchtaler, "Hans Pothorst", after Paul Pini, *Der Hildesheimer Didrik Pining als Entdecker Amerikas, als Admiral und als Gouverneur von Island im Dienste der Könige von Dänemark, Norwegen und Schweden* (Hildesheim, 1971).

246 Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 129–130; *DI* 16:302.

247 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 215; Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 187–195. See also Sections 3.5.2 and 7.4.2. A rather vague note in the donation register SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f.5v, refers to these events: "Jegen benoemeter Dyrich van Minden genoemet, is Cordt Moller der oldeen seligen broder gewesen, is bi des edlen juncken Clawes van der Marwitze dhomals k. m. in Dennemarck bestelter amptman aver Ißlandt, up Bessestade vaget gewesen, is anno 1539 van bischop T. Ogmunder by Schaleholte, mit sinen bestande dhodt geslagen worden. Der selen godt gnade". "Cordt Moller" must be Cordt van Minden, who is recorded as aboard the ships sailing to Hafnarfjörður in the 1540s and 1550s. A certain Asmus van Minden is also attested on these ships, who might be a relative as well.

Icelandic offices themselves. In the records of the monastery Þykkvabær it is mentioned that the administrator of the monastic holdings (*klausturhaldari*) Hans Berman was killed by the parish priest of Mýrar in 1583.[248] Hans Berman "the Younger" appears in the Hamburg donation register as a merchant trading in Iceland from 1573 to 1583; it is indeed mentioned that he died in 1583.[249] His grave can still be found on the churchyard in Þykkvabær.[250]

In 1600, the Hamburg merchants Cordt Basse and Hans Hering requested the renewal of their 1598 licence for the harbours Vopnafjörður and Þórshöfn in eastern Iceland, now without their former licence partner Jacob Winock, who had "received an office in Iceland" – he had become sheriff of Skriðuklaustur and Múlaþing.[251] In that capacity he had written a letter in August 1599 to the German Chancery in Copenhagen, in which he asked for information about the situation in Hornafjörður and Berufjörður, for which Joachim Focke had applied for a licence, but which was already in use by Friedrich Tilebare from Bremen.[252] It is not hard to imagine the benefit of having a Hamburg merchant as sheriff in the eastern fjords, where Hamburg and Bremen merchants had been in conflict over licences for about 25 years. Close cooperation with sheriff Eiríkur Árnason had proved to be beneficial for the Hamburg merchants in the area before.

The situation in another heavily contested region, Snæfellsnes in the west, a few years earlier is better documented. Bremen merchant Carsten Bake was made sheriff at the royal farm of Arnarstapi in 1593 and in 1596, which gave him a great deal of influence over the trade on the Snæfellsnes peninsula, with which he must have been well acquainted. His father had sailed to Búðir on the southern

248 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Islenzkar æviskrár frá landnámstímum til ársloka 1940* (Reykjavík, 1948) vol. 3, 125–126; Friederike Christiane Koch, "Das Grab des Hamburger Hansekaufmanns Hans Berman/Birman in Þykkvibær/Südisland", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 5.2 (1999): 45.

249 "Item gegeven van wegen seligernn Hans Berman dem Jungern". SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f.281v. The register of members of the England merchants in Hamburg mentions that he died at sea in 1584. Contrary to what Koch assumes, this is not the same Hans Berman who was elderman of the confraternity, as he was elderman until 1587 and therefore must have been 'the Elder'. See also Appendix C.

250 Koch, "Das Grab des Hans Berman". See also Section 4.5.

251 "Jacob Wineke in Ißlandt einem officio furgesetzet worden". RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16001024HAM00).

252 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (15990824SKR00). See also Section 6.6.4.

coast of Snæfellsnes for a long time, and he himself had held licences before for harbours in the area (Flatey and Hólmur), but had lost them both.[253] The latter fact was the main argument for acquiring his position as sheriff,[254] but the real reason must have been the ongoing attempts of Bremen merchants to maintain a presence on the northern shore of Snæfellsnes, after they had lost their licence for Kumbaravogur to Oldenburg in 1580. With the direct influence of one of their ranks in the area, the Bremen merchants had an information advantage that put them one step ahead of their Oldenburg competitors. Bake was able to acquire a licence for Nesvogur after the Count of Oldenburg had forgotten to renew it in 1593, and was instrumental in acquiring another licence for Stykkishólmur, which was practically the same harbour, in 1596.[255] Moreover, he collected complaints from the local population that the Oldenburg merchants were bringing commodities in insufficient quantities and of poor quality, and testimonies that Nesvogur and Stykkishólmur were in fact two separate harbours.[256] For these reasons, Helgi Þorláksson has dubbed him the "father of Stykkishólmur".[257]

Although Bake's position as sheriff in Snæfellsnes was thus instrumental in advancing the interests of Bremen merchants, it was an insecure one. The acquisition of the office of sheriff, which was normally reserved for Icelanders, required good connections on the island. In Bake's case, it has been suggested that Árni Oddsson, who had been sheriff of Snæfellsnes previously, in 1585 and 1594, and who was married to a German woman, helped him gain the position.[258] Nevertheless, in 1595 the new governor Brostrup Gedde sought the removal of Bake from office, which the Bremen city council managed to prevent.[259] Five years later Bake was given new weights by lawman Jón Jónsson, which were lighter than the old ones and therefore disadvantageous for the merchants. Bake had complained, but did not have the power to institute changes.[260] The next year,

253 See Sections 6.2.7 and 6.3.7.

254 Letters from Carsten Bake, 1593: RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15921231BRE00); Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15930228BRE01); SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15930228BRE00).

255 See Sections 6.3.5 and 6.3.6.

256 NLO Best. 20, -25, no. 6; SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 1597 complaint about the size of the Oldenburg ship (15970614STY00); complaint about bad flour from Oldenburg (15970725HEL00); testimonies that Stykkishólmur and Nesvogur were two distinct harbours (15970716STY00, 15970708STY00).

257 Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 150.

258 Þorláksson, 150, 219.

259 SAB 2-R.11.ff: Brostrup Gedde's request for a letter of warranty for Bake, July 1595 (15950702ISL00, 15950725ARN00).

260 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: testimony of Bremen city council, 30 December 1600 (16001230BRE00).

he was expelled from the island with his wife and children after being accused of using false weights.[261] A request for a licence for Arnarstapi to reclaim his outstanding debts was probably denied.[262] In the same year, Icelanders complained about the giving of Icelandic offices to foreigners who did not understand the laws of the land and the customs of the people. Jacob Winock was affected by this as well and had to resign from his office after being accused of having stabbed a man with a knife.[263]

4.4.2 The Faroe and Shetland Islands

Even more so than in Iceland, there was a great deal of overlap between offices on the Faroe Islands, where the political structure was comparable to Iceland. The positions of governor (*fúta*), lawman, and merchant supplying the islands with commodities often overlapped, and were sometimes held by the same person. For the Germans receiving permission to trade with the islands, this meant that they wielded significant influence in politics and legal workings on the Faroes. During the 1520s–1540s, when Joachim Wullenwever and Thomas Koppen from Hamburg were licensed to trade with the Faroes, their influence on life on the islands was considerable, as has been sketched above.[264] When Anders Guttormsen was appointed lawman on the Faroes in 1531, he had to swear his oath before Wullenwever, who was referred to as the king's governor (*fagett*) on the islands.[265] Two years later Wullenwever appeared before the Løgting, the Faroese parliament, which expressed its support for his position on the islands.[266] After the cooperation between Koppen and Wullenwever ended, the offices of governor and monopoly holder were separated: in 1535, Joen Nielsen is mentioned as governor, and Koppen's business was being run by his representative (*wmbossmanndt*) Hans Thehus.[267] Koppen's influence on the islands remained strong, however. For example, he received two-thirds of

261 Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 219.
262 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): January 1601 (16010129BRE00, 16010109BRE00).
263 Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 219.
264 See Section 3.6.
265 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 31.
266 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 168.
267 Debes, *Føroya søga*, 2:61; Degn, *Nøkur gomul, áður óprentað brøv*, 21.

the secularised church property in the Faroes in 1545, for which he paid 600 Lübeck mark annually.[268]

The later Hamburg merchants known to have had permission to trade in the Faroes, Joachim Thim and Joachim Wichman, were both factors for the Danish king in Hamburg, but did not hold political offices and often had to share their licences with merchants from Copenhagen or Bergen. During this time the office of governor and lawman on the Faroes were usually not held by a merchant, but since merchants were required to transport the tax revenues that were collected by the governor to Copenhagen, they had to work closely with the officials. This division of tasks was stated clearly in 1588, when Matz Baltzerssen was made governor and lawman on the Faroes. He was required to collect the taxes for the king and to hand them over to Joachim Wichman from Hamburg. Moreover, he was not allowed to trade for himself at such scale that Wichman would complain about it.[269] Cooperation between the two men is clearly visible through the donations made by the governor to the confraternity of St Anne in the years 1588–1591.[270]

As on the other islands, the administrative structure in Shetland was based on a Norwegian model. The sixteenth century, however, saw the loss of some Norwegian elements and the addition of new Scottish ones. The office of the lawman (judge or legal advisor) disappeared in the middle of the century, and the powers of the lawrightmen were greatly reduced in the 1570s. Their power shifted towards the governor, called foud or head foud (cf. Icelandic *fógeta*, Faroese *fúta*, German *vogt*), who was usually called sheriff depute after *c*. 1600. They were in a feudal relationship with the Scottish crown and the Earls of Orkney. The fouds appointed underfouds – later called bailies – in the parishes, who served as local judges.[271]

As he could issue licences and verdicts about trading rights, good relations with the foud or sheriff were especially important. This importance is exemplified by the foud Olave Sinclair of Havera (1543–1567), who decided among others about the use of certain harbours by merchants from Bremen in 1563,[272] and

268 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 182. The remaining third of the property was probably used to support the parish priests.

269 *KB* 1584–1588, 911–912; Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 104–105.

270 For 1591 he even made donations on two ships. It is not known whether Matz Baltzerssen also travelled to Hamburg in these years, although his appearance in the register suggests so.

271 John H. Ballantyne and Brian Smith, "Note on Offices and Officials in Shetland, 1195–1611", in *Shetland Documents, 1195–1579* (Lerwick, 1999), 306–308; Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 4–5; Riddell, "Shetland's German Trade", 2–3.

272 SAB 2-R.11.kk.; *SD 1195–1579*, no. 121 (15600720SCA00), no. 140 (15630818BRA00). See Section 5.2.

produced testimonies in the Bremen court case between merchant Gerdt Hemeling and ship carpenter Gerdt Breker, who was accused by Hemeling of being responsible for the death of his brother Cordt in Shetland in 1557.[273] On the contrary, a bad relationship with the foud could be quite disadvantageous for German merchants, as was for example the case with Lawrence Bruce of Cultmalindie, who was appointed sheriff depute around 1571 by his half-brother Robert Stewart, the Earl of Orkney. His tyrannical behaviour also affected the German merchants: among the 1577 complaints of Shetlanders against him are that he changed the weights and measures to increase tax incomes and that he confiscated goods from German traders at the *coupsetting* that would previously have been given to landowners and the common people.[274] The importance of the foud or sheriff for the German merchants is also underscored by the many instances in which he was made cautioner for German merchants in their absence, as can be seen from the court books from the early seventeenth century.[275]

The court books also shed light on the role of the court of Shetland in the German trade there. The Shetland parliament and court, the Lawthing, traditionally met at Tingwall (cf. *Þingvellir* in Iceland), with local things existing in the various parishes.[276] In the 1570s, Earl Robert Stewart moved the main court to Scalloway, while the sheriffs travelled around the country to preside at the local courts, and subsequently at the main court in late summer.[277] The court books for the years 1602–1604 and 1615–1629 show that German merchants appeared in both the local courts and the main court for all kinds of reasons, ranging from acts of violence and adultery to trade-related matters such as debts[278] or questions of the division of trading centres.

The dispute between the Hamburg merchants "Orne Meir" and Simon Harriestede ("Symone Harratstay") is exemplary in this respect. In 1602, Meir, based in Gluss, complained at the local court of Northmavine that his clients were trading with others, whereupon foud Arthur Sinclair of Aith commanded Harriestede, who was based in nearby Gunnister Voe, to move his business to the island of Papa Stour (Figure 5.3).[279] The Hamburg donation register shows

273 SAB 2-R.11.kk.; *SD 1195–1579*, no. 118 (15590906BRA00).

274 Balfour, *Oppressions*.

275 *CBS 1602–1604*, 41, 65, 107 (sheriff: Arthur Sinclair of Aith).

276 Brian Smith, "On the Nature of Tings: Shetland's Law Courts from the Middle Ages until 1611", *New Shetlander* 250 (2009): 37–45; Alexandra Sanmark, "Patterns of Assembly. Norse Thing Sites in Shetland", special volume, *Journal of the North Atlantic* 5 (2013): 96–110.

277 Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 2–3.

278 See also Section 4.2.3.

279 *CBS 1602–1604*, 16–17.

that Simon Harriestede "the Younger", after having been a servant in Iceland for a few years, began trading as a merchant in Shetland in 1602.[280] Before his short career in Iceland, Simon Harriestede is attested, together with Simon Harriestede "the Elder", on ships of Hans Meyer (who might be the Orne Meir from the court book) to Shetland. It is likely that Simon as an independent merchant returned to the region to which he had been introduced by his older relative of the same name, probably his father, but met with resistance from his former skipper, who feared too much competition. The following year Harriestede appealed Sinclair's judgement at the general court in Scalloway, claiming that he had received the right to trade in Gunnister Voe by Earl Robert Stewart, but the ruling stood.[281]

4.5 Relations with the church

A crucial factor in the relations of the German merchants with their North Atlantic clients was the relationship with the church. In pre-Reformation Iceland, the church owned up to half of the land, which it rented out to tenants. Moreover, the two dioceses of Hólar and Skálholt were the economic centres of Iceland, and there the bishops were active in trading themselves, in the absence of a local merchant class. They fitted out ships to sail to Norway to trade, were active in the fishing industry, and the bishop of Skálholt owned a storehouse in the harbour of Eyrarbakki. The Reformation abolished the monasteries but left the bishoprics largely intact, which retained the right to half of the income from the tithes and the landed property. Although the Lutheran superintendents were not as active in trading as their Catholic predecessors had been, they remained a dominant factor in the Icelandic economy. The same went for the many parish churches on a local level, which the parish priests received as fief: these were left largely intact after the Reformation.[282]

In the Faroes and Shetland, the church occupied a similar position. The bishops of Orkney (also responsible for Shetland) are known to have traded, as one is recorded as having debts with German merchants in Bergen in the early fifteenth century.[283] In the Faroes, bishop Amund tried to circumvent the trading monopoly and fit out a ship to sail to Bergen himself, because of discontent with Joachim Wullenwever's activities, in 1533.[284]

280 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), ff. 446v–447r. See also Appendix C.
281 *CBS 1602–1604*, 93–94.
282 Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 134–35; Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 69–83.
283 *HUB* 6:255; *DN* 1:665; Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 36n4.
284 Degn, *Nøkur gomul, áður óprentað brøv*, 14–15 (15330617KIR00).

The commercial relations of German merchants with the Icelandic bishops are well documented in the first half of the sixteenth century, especially those with the above-mentioned bishops Gizur Einarsson (1540–1548) and his predecessor Ögmundur Pálsson (1521–1540) of Skálholt. Bishop Gizur had good connections in Germany, as Ögmundur had sent him there for his studies, and he travelled via Hamburg to Copenhagen twice afterwards (1540 and 1542), in the process of being appointed as the Lutheran bishop of Skálholt. In Hamburg he had various dealings with the merchants trading with Iceland, notably Hinrick Hintzke, Peter Korner, and Hans van Lubbeke, on whose ships he travelled, and he bought extensive amounts of theological books, silverware, clothing, and fabrics.[285] In Iceland he remained in contact with these merchants, who brought him goods he had ordered. For example, Hinrick Hintzke brought bishop Gizur religious books in 1541, and he paid Hans van Lubbeke to bring lime and bricks for construction in Eyrarbakki the next year.[286]

During bishop Gizur's time, we also hear about the commercial connections with German merchants of his predecessor Ögmundur, who left unpaid debts after his death. In 1542, Hamburg's council wrote Gizur with a request that he pay a debt of twenty mark and ten shilling that bishop Ögmundur still owed to merchant Hinrick Martens for an organ for the church of Skálholt,[287] and the year before, for a loan of fifteen daler from Heine Sander, for which the bishop promised to pay 30 *wete* of stockfish; twenty of which had been paid by the abbot of Helgafell, with ten *wete* still outstanding.[288] Although the economy in Iceland was predominantly moneyless, the bishops stored part of their capital in coins and objects of precious metals. For the same reason, bishop Ögmundur gave sheriff Jón Hallsson the right to collect the tolls of English traders in gold and money in 1536.[289] For their part, the German merchants apparently saw it as one of their duties to bring money into the country, as they

285 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 161–70; Alessia Bauer, *Laienastrologie im nachreformatorischen Island. Studien zu Gelehrsamkeit und Aberglauben* (Munich, 2015), 22–24.

286 *DI* 10:393. See also Sections 4.3.3 and 6.2.1.

287 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2: 14 March 1542 (15420314HAM00). According to Friederike Christiane Koch, "Forschungsergebnisse über die erste Orgel in Skálholt/Südisland", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 3.1 (1997): 44, the organ must have been delivered to and installed in the church of Skálholt in 1538. Hinrick Martens is mentioned that year in the donation register on the ship of Hinrick Otten, together with "Hans de argelist" ('Hans the organ player'), who was probably the person who installed and tuned the organ. (SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 15v).

288 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2: 7 April 1541 (15410407HAM00).

289 Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 75, 79.

mentioned this in their defence upon the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in 1602.[290]

We find a similar situation in the northern bishopric of Hólar, which was especially important for the sulphur trade. Petitions from Hamburg from 1532 and 1536 to the bishop of Hólar to prevent merchants from Holland from buying all the sulphur in the harbour of Húsavík testify to the bishop's influence.[291] In 1595, Albert Sivers, as part of requesting for a licence for Skagafjörður (Hofsós), mentioned that bishop Guðbrandur Þorlákssson and his servants were very content with him in hopes that this would improve his chances of being granted the license.[292] The role of the bishops in Iceland in terms of the economy seems to have been of greater importance to German merchants than their role in terms of religion, specifically in relation to the Reformation. For example, the letter of Hamburg merchants in reaction to the attacks on the monastery Viðey in 1539 emphasises the negative effects of a chaotic situation for their business.[293] On this basis Vilborg Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel suggests that the alleged support of Hamburg merchants for the rebellion of the northern bishop Jón Arason might have been related to their interests in the sulphur trade in that part of the island.[294]

Due to many parish churches having extensive landholdings, the German merchants had many dealings with the parish priests. We find many priests among the customers of Clawes Monnickhusen and the Oldenburg merchants in Kumbaravogur.[295] Moreover, they occasionally supported the German merchants in other ways. More than half of the Icelandic clients of the Bremen merchants in Berufjörður who expressed support for them against their Hamburg competitors were priests from farms around Múlasýsla (6/10 in 1590; 10/17 in 1591).[296] When Hinrich Moller from Hamburg tried to acquire a licence for Þórshöfn in Langanes in 1495, he was supported by four Icelandic priests from the region.[297] Moreover, it seems that parish churches could function as neutral grounds in the case of disputes. In 1504, two Hamburg merchants, Hinrich Sasse and Hans Tappe, met in the churchyard in Setberg near Grundarfjörður

290 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19); SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4 (16011029HAM00).

291 *DI* 9:529; *DI* 16:341 (15360525HAM00).

292 "In anmerckungh das vorberörther bischoff [Guðbrandur Þorlákssson], und untergehörige leuthe mit Albrecht Sivers sehr woll zufrieden etc.". RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15950703HAM01).

293 See Section 3.5.2.

294 Ísleifsdóttir-Bickel, *Reformation in Island*, 341.

295 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 30; Ásgeirsson, "Verzlunarbók", 52–60.

296 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16 and 18a).

297 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9): request of priests in Vopnafjörður, August / September 1594 (15940800VOP00, 15940826VOP00, 15940901HOF00).

to discuss the fight they had had about the right to trade in Grundarfjörður. Setberg, located about 4 km from the trading site (Figure 6.5), was the nearest church.[298]

Likewise, the connections to the parish churches in Shetland seem to have been close. Particularly telling is the letter drafted in 1661 by ministers of the church in Lund in Unst (Figure 1.1) and the local landowners in support of the complaints of Bremen merchants Herman and Gerdt Detken about illegal custom collection. In the document the ministers state that the merchants and their predecessors had always conducted themselves like faithful Christians, had attended church services, and had made donations for the poor and for the maintenance of the church.[299] The church was also instrumental in controlling the rightful behaviour of the German merchants on the islands. In 1626, Hein Grasmoller ("Hynd Grasmiller") from Hamburg was summoned to the church in Scalloway as soon as he returned to Shetland to make amends "for his furnicatioun and contempt of the discipline of the kirk".[300]

The material testimony to the long-standing relations of German merchants with the church on the North Atlantic islands are the many items for the interior of churches brought by the merchants. The organ acquired for the cathedral of Skálholt has already been mentioned, and in 1525, 1538, and 1558 bells were made in Hamburg for the cathedral of Hólar.[301] Many of these objects are still in existence: for example, a late Gothic altarpiece in the cathedral of Hólar (Figure 4.7) is stylistically dated to the early sixteenth century and is thought to have been made in Germany or the Netherlands. It is likely to have been brought to the cathedral by German merchants, possibly on order of the bishop.[302] A chalice donated by Bartholomeus Gersteman to St James's (*Jakobi*) Church in Hamburg in the mid-fifteenth century has ended up in the National Museum of Iceland, probably because it was sold in Iceland after the Reformation in Hamburg.[303]

298 *DI* 16:256 (15060128HAM00). See also Section 6.3.4.

299 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: 31 August 1661 (16610831LUN00).

300 *CBS 1615–1629*, 114.

301 *DI* 3:511; Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 370; Friederike Christiane Koch, "Glocken aus Hamburg für die Domkirche in Hólar/Nordisland", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 5.1 (1999): 44–45.

302 Kristján Eldjárn, "Hólabríkin", in *Kirkjur Íslands*, ed. Margrét Hallgrímsdóttir et al., vol. 6. *Friðaðar kirkjur í Skagafjarðarprófastsdæmi* (Reykjavík, 2005), 189–193.

303 Rekjavík, Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, inv. no. 5599. See Friederike Christiane Koch, "Das älteste Altargerät der Hamburger St. Jakobikirche wird im Þjóðsminjasafn Íslands in Reykjavík verwahrt", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 3.2 (1997): 40–41.

In the Faroes, green-glazed tiles of a stove found during excavations in the bishop's seat of Kirkjubøur (Figure 4.8), contain religious imagery, both of a Catholic and a Lutheran character (Figure 4.9). Inductively coupled plasma

Figure 4.7: Altarpiece of Hólar cathedral, northern Iceland. Photograph courtesy of Þjóðminjasafn Íslands.

Figure 4.8: The ruined St Magnus Cathedral and the royal farm in Kirkjubøur, Streymoy, Faroes. Photograph by Erik Christensen (Wikimedia Commons).

Figure 4.9: Stove tile from the bishop's seat in Kirkjubøur, Faroe Islands, with image of St Paul the Apostle. Photograph courtesy of Natascha Mehler.

(ICP) analysis performed on these tiles shows that they were made from clays found on various sites in Lübeck and the region around Hamburg, which supports the theory that they were brought to the Faroes around the time of the Reformation by German merchants, most probably by Joachim Wullenwever and Thomas Koppen or their companions.[304]

Not always were these items sold; there is also evidence for German merchants donating to local churches on the North Atlantic islands as a religious act or to strengthen ties with the local community. A likely example is a fifteenth-century chasuble from the church of Reykhólar in Breiðafjörður bay, which has on the backpiece an embroidered image of St Nicholas, the patron saint of seafarers, who is saving men on board a ship with a broken mast. The flag on the ship shows the coat of arms of Bremen, a clear indication of the relationship with both the city and the business of the German merchants (Figure 4.10).[305] From the church of Holt in Önundarfjörður in the Westfjords is a metal baptismal

304 In an upcoming article by Torbjörn Brorsson and Natascha Mehler. With kind permission of the authors.

305 Reykjavík, Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, inv. no. 2458/1883-307. Bremen merchants are indeed known to have been active in the region for a long time. See Section 6.3.5 and 6.3.7.

bowl on a wooden standard, which an inscription identifies as a donation to the priest Sveinn Simonarson from his friend, Hamburg merchant Roleff Eys in 1594, who was indeed trading in Ísafjarðarsýsla in the 1590s.[306] A wooden statue of St Anne, the Virgin Mary, and the baby Jesus (*Annen-Selbdritt*) (Figure 5.8) from the same church might have been part of the interior of the chapel of the confraternity of St Anne in Hamburg at one time and possibly sold to Iceland after the confraternity lost the chapel in 1535.[307] Finally, a wooden crucifix from the Faroese village Viðareiði on Viðoy has "Thomas Koppen" and "1551" written on the base.[308]

The occasion that beyond all others strengthened the relations of German merchants with the local churches in the North Atlantic was the burial of a merchant who died on the islands in a local churchyard, thereby symbolically becoming part of the local community over temporary boundaries. A gravestone from 1585 from the church in Helgafell in Snæfellsnes shows the name, house mark, and coat of arms (with two crossed fishes) of Bremen merchant Claus Lude (Figure 4.11),[309] and a gravestone in the churchyard in Þykkvabær/Álftaver in southern Iceland indicates the burial site of Hans Berman in 1583.[310] In Shetland, two gravestones of Bremen merchants are known from the church of Lunda Wick on the island of Unst, one of Hinrick Segelcken from 1585, the other of Segebad Detken, the latter of whom is mentioned as having traded in Shetland for 52

306 Reykjavík, Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, inv. no. 2071. Inscription: "ANNO 1594 / HEBE [I]CH / ROLEFF / EIS DVSE DEIPE / GEMOKET / THO GODES / PRIS VNDE NA / MINES GV / DEN FRVD / ES BEGER SIN NAME / IS SERA SVEIRN SI / MON SON GODT HEL / PE VNS IN / DES HEME / LS TRON WOL DAR GELOUET YNDE / GEDOFFT WERT / DE WERT SALICH." Based on the inscription, Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 276 believes that Eys made the bowl himself, but is not able to identify him as a member of any of the Hamburg metalworkers guilds. Although the inscription does indeed suggest that Eys made the bowl himself, he seems to have been an ordinary merchant and probably ordered the bowl from the metalworkers in Hamburg. See also Section 6.4.2.

307 Reykjavík, Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, inv. no. 2069/1882-29. The piece is thought to have been created in Hamburg *c*.1513. Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 29; Piper, "Annenkapelle", 173.

308 Símun V. Arge, "Aspects of Hanse Archaeology in the Faroe Islands", in *German Trade in the North Atlantic, c. 1400–1700. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Natascha Mehler, Mark Gardiner, and Endre Elvestad, AmS-Skrifter 27 (Stavanger, 2019), 287.

309 Reykjavík, Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, inv. no. 6242/1912-17. Inscription: "Anno 1585 de.3. Junius starff clawes lüde van Bremen der olde. Dem godt gnedich seij".

310 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 364n12; Koch, "Das Grab des Hans Berman". The inscription reads: "HIR LICHT BEGRAVEN SALICH HANS BIRMA[N] D:I:V:H [i.e. De Junger van Hamborg] ANNO 1583". Hans Berman was administrator of the monastic property of Þykkvabær. See Section 4.4.1.1.

Figure 4.10: The embroidered backpiece of a chasuble from the church of Reykhólar, showing St Nicholas on a ship, with the coat of arms of Bremen on the flag. Image courtesy of Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, inv. no. 2458/1883–307.

years.[311] In 1661, the noblemen, minister, and elders of the parish of Unst cited this when they provided the testimony for Segebad's sons Herman and Gerdt Detken mentioned above.[312]

311 MacDonald, "More Shetland Tombstones", 27–36; Entholt and Beutin, *Bremen und Nordeuropa*, 17; Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 75. The inscription on Hinrick Segelcken's gravestone reads: "ANNO 1585 DEN 25 IULII / UP S. JACOBI IS DE EHRBARE / UND VORNEHME HINRICK / SEGELCKEN DE OLDER UTH / DUDESCHLANT UND BORGER / DER STADT BREMEN ALHIR / IN GODT DEM HERN ENTSCHL / APN DEM GODT GNEDICH IS"; for the text on Detken's slab, see Section 1, footnote 1.

312 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: 31 August 1661 (16610831LUN00).

Figure 4.11: Gravestone of Claus Lude from the church of Helgafell. Image courtesy of Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, inv. no. 6242/1912-17.

5 Harbours and trading places

We have already seen how the trading stations in the North Atlantic functioned as markets and places for social gatherings and had a special legal status.[1] The following chapters will analyse these trading sites from a physical perspective, and provide a topographical study as well as an analysis of how they were used and how this influenced trading conditions on the North Atlantic islands.

For a long time little was known about the harbours in use in the North Atlantic. For example, Baasch lists the Icelandic place names he found in the archival sources from Hamburg, but is not able to identify most of them, indicating that a topographical study was beyond the scope of his research.[2] This difficulty was mainly caused by the fact that the contemporary Low German or Danish sources render the Icelandic and Shetlandic names in such a way that they are sometimes hard to pair with modern place names. A better understanding of the harbours in the North Atlantic islands has only been achieved more recently, with important contributions being Jón Aðils' analysis of Icelandic trading stations during the Danish trade monopoly,[3] the work of researchers from the North Atlantic islands,[4] and archaeological studies of trading stations.[5] In addition, unpublished records from the Danish State Archives in Copenhagen provide a wealth of information, especially regarding Iceland; the present study has made extensive use of these.

The locations and infrastructure of the harbours in the North Atlantic are defined by the local natural conditions, socioeconomic realities, and settlement patterns. Unlike on the European continent, urbanisation in the North Atlantic is a modern phenomenon, and the population lived spread out along the coast in farms, with only a few denser settlements.[6] Moreover, the seasonal character of the trade provided little incentive for islanders to settle at the trading places.[7]

1 See Section 4.1.4.

2 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 105–108.

3 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 277–319.

4 E.g. Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 192–93; Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 67–109; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 10–20.

5 E.g. Mehler and Gardiner, "On the Verge of Colonialism", 1–14; Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 385–427; Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home", 175–186; Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 93–95, 103–104, 114–16, 139–169.

6 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 181–182; Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 73–74.

7 Björn Teitsson, "Islandske kjøpsteder 1600–1800", in *Urbaniseringsprosessen i Norden*, ed. Grethe Authén Blom, vol. 1: Middelaldersteder (Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø, 1977), 91; Gardiner, "Commercial Fishing", 87.

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The "harbours" should thus be understood in most cases as being natural harbours with only the most rudimentary port infrastructure (e.g. mooring rings on rocks and skerries)[8] where a merchant ship could be anchored relatively safely, and where there were temporary storehouses or other structures.[9] It might therefore be better to speak about trading places instead of harbours, as Helgi Þorláksson suggests with regards to the Icelandic situation.[10] This characterisation is also appropriate for Shetland and the Faroes.[11]

Figure 5.1: Mooring rings along the Norwegian coast near Bergen, from Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555). Similar constructions were in use on the North Atlantic islands.

5.1 Harbours in Iceland

In Iceland, around twenty trading sites were used annually by German merchants during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The accounts of sheriff Eggert Hannesson from 1552 give us an impression of the German activity in Iceland in

8 Magnus, *Historia* 4:13 (vol. I, 108) also notes the use of mooring rings in the fjords and skerries around Bergen, which were constructed for foreign commercial ships (Figure 5.1).
9 Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home", 6.
10 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 172.
11 See Arge, "Aspects of Hanse Archaeology"; Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home"; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 10–20.

summer: it lists nineteen German ships in seventeen Icelandic harbours, of which four were from Bremen, two from Lübeck and the rest from Hamburg (Table 5.1). However, there are more harbours known to have been in use, at least part of the

Table 5.1: Icelandic harbours in use by German merchants in 1552.

Name	Home town	Harbour
Herman Vedemand (Herman Wedeman)	Bremen	Ostfyor (Berufjörður)
Kortt Lineberrigh (Cordt Lunenberg)	Hamburg	Torlackershaffuen (Þorlákshöfn/ Eyrarbakki)
Lyder Kock	Bremen	Grindewigh (Grindavík)
Hans Smitt	Hamburg	Bosande (Básendar)
Menertt Ffresse (Meinert Frese)	Hamburg	Kebelluigh (Keflavík)
Kortt Haruigh (Cordt Harwede)	Hamburg	Hauneffyor (Hafnarfjörður)
Hans Sidenborrigh (Hans Sydenborch)	Hamburg	Haneffyor (Hafnarfjörður)
Henrick Kron	Lübeck	Holmme (Hólmur/Reykjavík)
Diderick Gropper (Dirick Groper)	Hamburg	Ackernes (Akranes)
Henrick Holste	Bremen	Buderhaffuen (Búðir)
Claus Monickhussen	Bremen	Komerwoge (Kumbaravogur)
Herman Struckmeer (Herman Struckmeyer)	Hamburg	Reff (Ríf)
Iorijn Willers (Joachim Willers)	Hamburg	Stape (Arnarstapi)
Iorgen Meer (Hinrick? Meyer)	Hamburg	Gryndeffyor (Grundarfjörður)
Welken Kortts (Wilcken Cordes)	Hamburg	Skottellffyor (Skutulsfjörður/ Ísafjarðarsýsla)
Henrick Vitte	Hamburg	Hoffsose (Hofsós/Skagafjörður)
Otte Baade	Hamburg	Husseuigh (Húsavík)
Claus Rode	Lübeck	Oeyeffyor (Eyjafjörður/Akureyri)
Hans Bymeke (Hans Buneke)	Hamburg	Oeyeffyor

Source: accounts of Eggert Hannesson (*DI* 12:323). Names and place names as written in the Icelandic source; between brackets the German names as they appear in the Hamburg donation register, when substantially different from the Icelandic, and modern place names (see Section 6).

time. The most thorough overviews to date are the maps that Adolf Hofmeister and Helgi Þorláksson have created, which show the many harbours that were used in Iceland with the German cities from which the merchants at each harbour came.[12] As the authors did not attempt to provide a thorough topographical study, however, the maps are incomplete in two respects: first, they do not indicate all of the harbours that were used by German merchants, and second, they do not show the temporal dynamics of how the harbours were used. Many sources show that the use of a certain harbour cannot be so clearly associated with the merchants of a particular city: although harbours were often used by a certain group of merchants for a longer period, it was not unusual that the harbours changed hands. Moreover, there are many cases in which licences were contested by merchants from different cities, in which merchants from different cities interfered with each other, cooperated, or where a licence holder chartered ships from other cities.

A good starting point for research on the harbours used by German merchants in Iceland is the time of the Danish trade monopoly after 1602, which has been more thoroughly researched.[13] Moreover, the monopoly is a period in which the trade was much more structured, and for which there are more sources available. The number of harbours was fixed to 20 in 1602, and by 1660 had been increased to 24 or 25, after complaints from Icelanders. They were categorised as either "fish harbours" or "slaughter harbours", according to whether they mainly supplied products from the sea or land.[14]

There was ample continuity in the use of trading places throughout the centuries. The Danish merchants after 1601 used many of the same harbours that had been used by German traders before and probably in much the same way. The Germans for their part traded at harbours that had been used by Norwegian traders in the fourteenth century or by the English more recently. Helgi Þorláksson has shown that the concentration of power in Iceland in the hands of a few important men after 1200, in connection to the growing role of foreign merchants in Iceland, had led to the establishment of around ten centralised trading places associated with the leading agricultural areas. The rise of the export of fish as the dominant factor in Icelandic economy after 1300 shifted the focus of trade to the main fishing areas in the western part of the island, where thus the highest density of trading places could be found.[15] It was these harbours which were mainly used by the Norwegian, English, German, and subsequently Danish traders.

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12 Hofmeister, "Hansische Kaufleute", 40; Þorláksson, *Frá kirkjuvaldi til ríkisvalds*, 147.

13 See Aðils, *Monopolhandel*; Gunnarsson, *Monopoly Trade*.

14 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 277–279.

15 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 162, 165–166.

For the German period, most of the sources concerning the different harbours date from the sixteenth century and are connected to the licence system, which was introduced in the early 1560s.[16] Most of the time, however, these sources only mention a place name, which is sometimes hard to identify due to orthographical peculiarities. Nor is it always clear whether the person who received the licence was sailing himself or chartered others to sail for him.[17] Moreover, the activities of the merchants using these trading places extended well beyond the area of the harbour itself, and there is much evidence that suggests that merchants used other trading sites in addition to the "official" harbours in their district. Therefore, names of trading places probably often referred not to a settlement, but to a certain fjord or bay, even if a modern town with the same name exists.

These areas were first fixed in 1684, when the Danes introduced the district trade. From this moment onwards, harbours were tied to the district in which they were located, and the Icelanders were obliged to trade with the merchants in the harbour that belonged to their district.[18] Before that time, however, the districts were not regulated and in most cases largely undefined. This was probably at least partly caused by the limited information the Danish authorities had about the situation in the north.[19] Only in very rare cases do we find brief mentions of the extent of a district, for example "Kumbaravogur reaches from Ríf and Ólafsvík to Flatey".[20] It is likely that the districts became better defined with the introduction of licences, as it became important to know where a licence was valid and where not, although most licences only mention a place name and do not describe the extent of the trading district.

The most illustrative example is here the "harbour" that was traditionally used as "Ostforde" ('East fjord') by Bremen merchants. In Icelandic, there is no specific fjord called "East fjord". Instead, Austfirðir or Austlendingafiordung referred to the entire eastern part of the island, one of the quarters into which the country was traditionally divided. After a dispute erupted first with merchants in Vopnafjörður ("Wapenforde"), one of the eastern fjords, and afterwards with the Hamburg merchants who acquired a licence for "Bernforde" (Berufjörður) in 1590, the Bremen licence became more specifically defined as "Ostforde" or "Pappie"

16 See Section 3.5.4.

17 See also Section 7.2.4.

18 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 279.

19 See Section 3.5.4.

20 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Instruction for Tyleman Zerneman, 26 September 1567: "von das Reff und Wyck bis Flattoy" (15670926BRE00). See Section 6.3.5.

(Papey, a small island near Berufjörður) with the entire "Ostfordsyssel" (probably the district Suður-Múlasýsla) and the main trading station "Fuluwick" (Fýluvogur, nowadays part of Djúpivogur). Archaeological excavations, however, show that on the other side of Berufjörður, a trading site named Gautavík was in use by German merchants until the early seventeenth century.[21]

Another way to determine the extent of the districts surrounding harbours is analysing the customer networks of German merchants. The account books of Bremen merchant Clawes Monnickhusen from 1558 and of the Oldenburg merchants from 1585 in Kumbaravogur show that their customers lived within a radius of about 60 km around the harbour, an area large enough that it must have overlapped with the areas associated with many other harbours in use by German merchants on the Snæfellsnes peninsula (Figure 4.4).[22] In the same way, we can see that the persons from whom testimonies were collected by Bremen merchants in the dispute about Berufjörður were living along neighbouring fjords as well, even as far away as Hjaltastaðir í Utmannasveit, about 90 km from Djúpivogur (Figure 5.2).[23]

Given the large extents of these districts, it is the question whether the customers visited the foreign merchants in their harbours or the merchants visited their customers at home. There is evidence for both options, and it probably depended on the circumstances which one was chosen. Generally speaking, we might assume that in areas with a larger density of trading stations, customers would often visit the trading sites themselves, whereas merchants using harbours associated with large areas, such as in the eastern fjords, are likely to have visited their customers at home, as the latter would have had to travel for days to get to the trading site. In the testimonies collected by Bremen merchants in and around Berufjörður, for example, we find many references that they had visited adjacent fjords by ship.[24] In 1567, the merchants from Bremen mentioned that they had left a ship in the harbour, which they used to travel around for their business.[25]

21 Mehler et al., "Gautavík", 237–40. See Section 6.6.3.

22 See Section 4.2.2.

23 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): testimony of Snorri Hallsson and Arni Olafsson, 11 August 1591 (15910811BER00).

24 See Section 4.3.1, footnote 139.

25 "daß sie zu undterhaltung der jetzgedachter havenn, . . . ein schiff, damit sie landtwertß ab und an, ihrer notturfft nach siegelenn muchtenn, gebauwet". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): Bremen complaints against Heinrich Mumme in Berufjörður, 28 February 1567 (15670228BRE00).

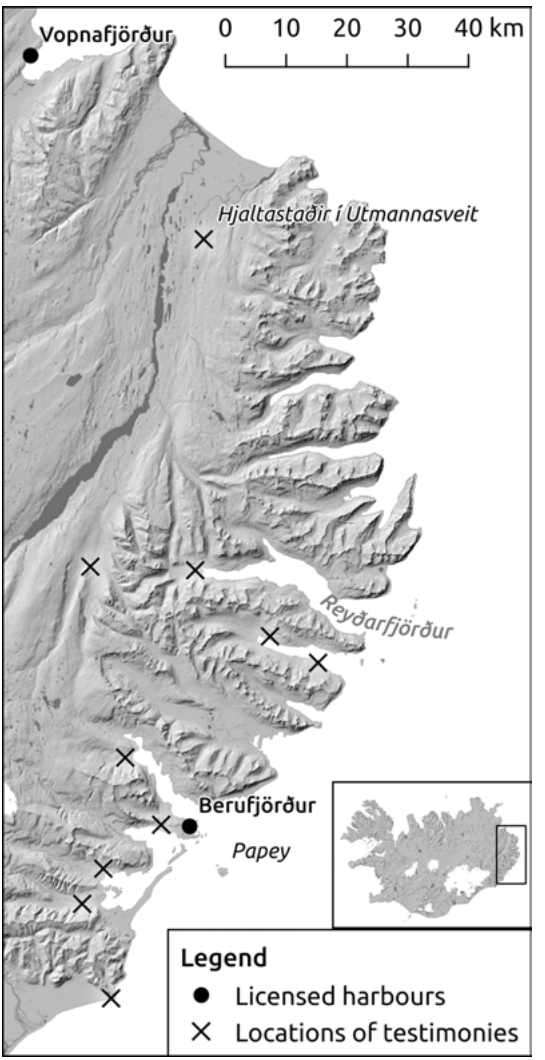

Figure 5.2: Locations of clients in the Icelandic eastern fjords providing written testimonies in support of Bremen merchants, 1590/1.

On the Reykjanes peninsula, on the contrary, examples of the other possibility abound. To name but a few, in 1586, the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne recorded that an Icelander came to the merchants in Hafnarfjörður to pay the debt of his father, but did not know to which merchant

he was indebted.[26] The crew of a ship from Helsingør that sought refuge in Básendar in 1602, being unable to reach their original destination in northern Iceland because of abundant sea ice, claimed that the locals welcomed them because they could not transport their fish to the nearest manned trading station in Keflavík, three miles away, as most of their horses had died during the winter. Skipper Johan Adriansen was keen to point out that since the Icelanders had come out to meet them by boat, they could have gone to Keflavík by water.[27] Similarly, Hamburg merchants were issued a licence for Hvalfjörður in October 1600, on the grounds that while the inhabitants there had always been served by merchants from Hafnarfjörður, the distance was unreasonably great (ten miles), indicating that the customers had to travel there themselves.[28]

Finally, it is possible to get some idea of the commercial importance of the various harbours in Iceland from a list of harbours offered to Hamburg in return for a loan of 100,000 daler to the Danish king in 1565 (Table 5.2). This source indicates the required amount of flour to be imported to cover the needs of the trading district for each harbour, indicating their commercial value. We can see that Hafnarfjörður was by far the most important harbour on the islands, requiring twice as much flour as the second-largest harbours, Básendar and Álftafjörður. Moreover, it is clear that most of the harbours were located in the areas with the richest fishing grounds in the west, around the Reykjanes peninsula and in the Westfjords. Only one harbour in the east is mentioned and none in the north (although the latter probably had to do with the ban on the sulphur trade, as this was mostly exported from the north). It should be noted, however, that this source provides only estimated values and that it lists only a part of the harbours in Iceland, with a notable absence of harbours on the Snæfellsnes peninsula, which we know from other sources to have been much frequented by German merchants. Luckily, there is a great amount of material available which sheds more light on specific Icelandic harbours and the different conditions around the country. These will be discussed in detail in chapter 6.

26 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 316r. For the citation, see Section 4.2.2, footnote 110.

27 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): witness accounts, 30 August 1602 (16020830HAM00). See Section 6.2.3.

28 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8): overview of licensed harbours, 1601 (16010000XXX00).

Table 5.2: Harbours offered to Hamburg in 1565.

Name in the source	Modern name	Region	Required amount of flour (in lasts)
Ost fiorde oder Papper	Berufjörður	east	20
Bodsandt	Básendar	southwest	30
Keblevig	Keflavík	southwest	20
Haffnefordt	Hafnarfjörður	southwest	60
Ackrannes	Akranes	southwest	10
Patersfiordt	Patreksfjörður	Westfjords	20
Tolkefiordt; Billingervoge	Tálknafjörður; Bíldudalur	Westfjords	15; 20
Direfiordt	Dýrafjörður	Westfjords	15
Skotzfiordt	Skutulsfjörður	Westfjords	15
Altefiordt	Álftafjörður	Westfjords	30

Source: RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II. 16) (15650000XXX00). Tálknafjörður and Bíldudalur are considered together as one harbour.

5.2 Harbours in Shetland

It is known that Bremen and Hamburg merchants in Shetland used many different harbours all over the archipelago as well. However, due to the absence of a systematic licence system as was in place in Iceland,[29] there is much less certainty about the locations of these harbours. The statement given by the foud Olave Sinclair in the course of a 1563 dispute between Bremen merchants sheds light on the system of different harbours used in Shetland. Skipper Johan Runge and merchant Johan Cordes requested to use the harbour Baltasound ("Baltosunt") on the northernmost island of Unst, a request that Sinclair denied because there were already three other Bremen ships active in the immediate area: skipper Dirick Voege in Uyeasound ("Oegesunt") in Unst, skipper Segebad Detken and merchant

29 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 77 mentions a "licence system", but does not provide a source. To the best of my knowledge, there exists only one known licence for Shetland, which was granted in the course of the 1563 dispute between Johan Runge and Segebad Detken (*SD 1195–1579*, no. 121; 15600720SCA00). Concluding that there was a "system" based on one single case is a stretch, to say the least.

Johan Schulle in Burravoe ("Borwage") in Yell, and skipper Johan Michel in Cullivoe ("Koldewage") in Yell. Detken had in fact complained to Sinclair that Runge and Cordes, his former trading partners, had chosen a harbour so nearby.[30] In the document Sinclair states that he had offered Runge and Cordes their choice from among several other harbours, where the inhabitants were in dire need of commodities: Scalloway ("Schalewage"), Laxfirth ("Lassevorde"), Bressay Sound ("Brussunt"), Whalsay ("Quallsunt"), Dunrossness ("Drostenes"), Papa Stour ("Sunte Mangens Eilandt", 'St Magnus's isle' – its old name), Walls/Vaila Sound ("Wallosunt"), and Sound of Papa ("Papposunt"), which Sinclair called "the main harbours of the entire country" (Figure 5.3).[31]

Runge and Cordes declined this offer, and went to Bergen instead.[32] The reasons for this are unclear: was there not enough merchandise on offer in the southern part of Shetland? Or did they lack a network among the local population, which they must have had in Unst as they had traded there with Segebad Detken before? Whatever the case may be, the documents pertaining to the case give us some idea about the harbours on Shetland: apparently, the many harbours were not in use all the time, as Sinclair seems to suggest that the "main harbours" were available at the time. Secondly, there seems to have been a focus of activity around the northern islands Unst, Fetlar, and Yell, although it is the question whether this only presents the situation at the moment of writing or a more general pattern.[33] The vague terms of the document, however, do not permit the conclusion that there was a "hierarchy of ports" on Shetland, as Mehler and Gardiner have proposed.[34]

Rather, Sinclair's term "main harbours" might refer to a situation that is rather similar to that on Iceland: the harbour represented only the anchoring place of a ship, and the range of commercial activity connected to the harbour covered a much wider area. A Bremen court case from 1558 suggests the same. In the case, Gerdt Breker, a ship's carpenter, tried to retract his confession of guilt, which obliged him to pay compensation to the heirs of Cordt Hemeling, a

30 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: defence of Segebad Detken, 19 November 1562 (15621119BRE00).

31 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 140: "de principall haven im gantzen lande" (15630818BRA00).

32 SAB 2-R.11.kk. (15621026BRE00). See *SD 1195–1579*, p. 106.

33 The focus on the northern islands Unst, Yell, and Fetlar is also noticed by Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 74–75; and Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 14. According to Smith, of all merchants known to have traded in Shetland in the seventeenth century, about a fifth of those known to have visited a specific harbour went to Unst and Fetlar. The references to German merchants in *CBS 1602–1604* give this impression as well: the majority of the merchants focussed on the northern islands, with the harbour Uyeasound in Unst being the prime destination.

34 Mehler and Gardiner, "On the Verge of Colonialism", 7.

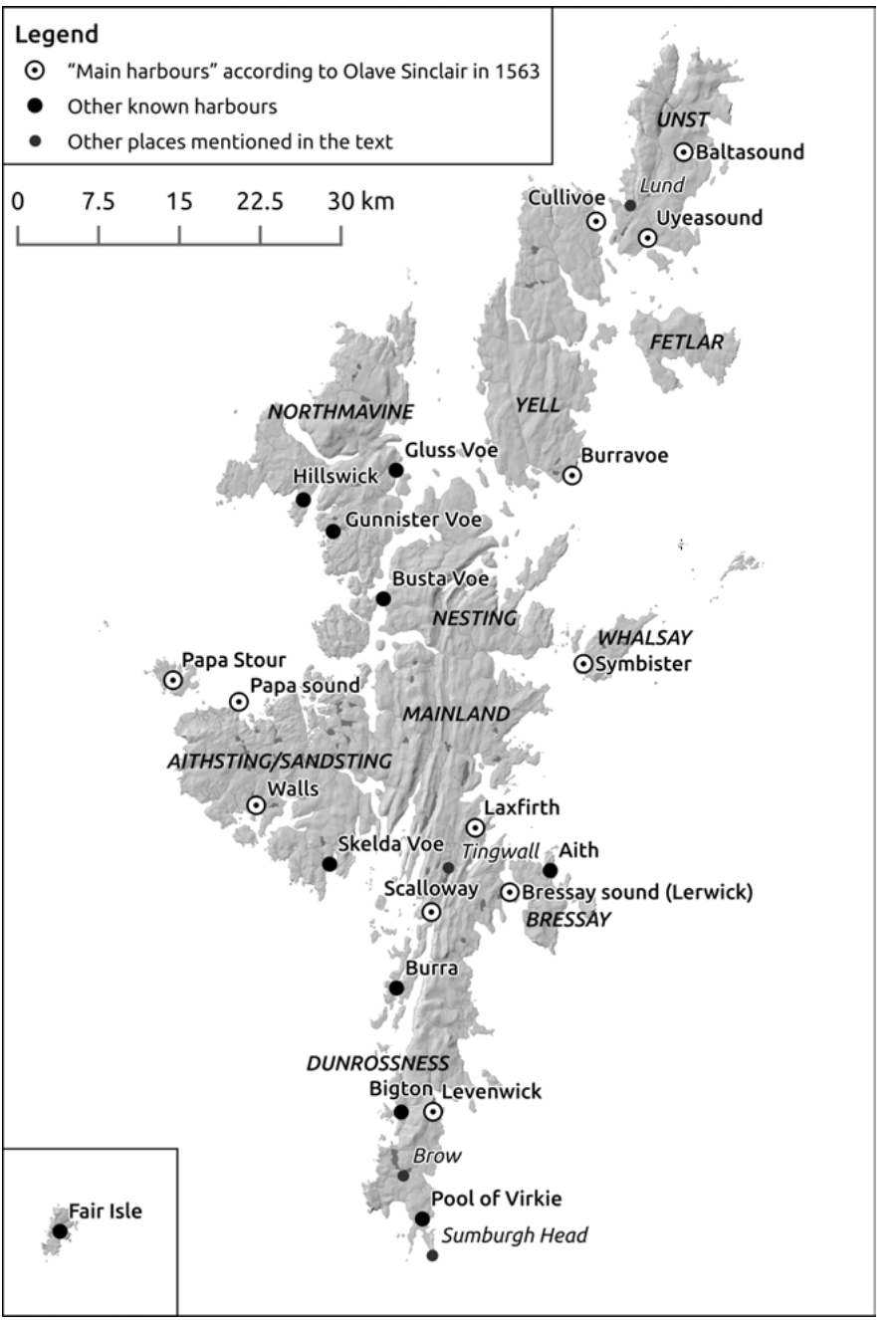

Figure 5.3: Map of harbours used in Shetland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

skipper with whom he had sailed to Shetland the year before and whom he was accused of having forcefully attacked, leading to the latter's death. Breker, in his defence, stated that Hemeling had misbehaved towards the ship's crew, and sketched the incident that led to the violent confrontation between the two. According to Breker, he had gone with two others in a boat to Laxfirth ("Laeß forde") and had returned late at night, which had spurred the rage of Hemeling, who attacked him, upon which Breker in defending himself had injured Hemeling.[35] According to a testimony of Olave Sinclair, Hemeling's ship had been anchored in Whalsay ("Qualsunt") at the time.[36] Both harbours are mentioned by Sinclair as main harbours five years later, and they are about 15 km apart. If both testimonies are correct, it shows that the harbours were not clearly separated, and merchants used boats to trade in a wider area around them. In addition, calls by German merchants for clients to pay their debts in 1602 show that the former were trading in regions where other harbours were located.[37]

The identification of the places named by Sinclair is not always a straightforward task. Dunrossness and Walls, for example, are regions on the island of Mainland, and not specific places. "Quallsunt" or "Quhailsaysound" seems to refer more to the water (sound) separating the island of Whalsay from Mainland than to Whalsay itself. The Sound of Papa is the water between the island Papa Stour and the region Walls, and is therefore an unlikely locale for trading, as it is located in close proximity of Papa Stour ("Sunte Magens Eilandt"), which is listed as a separate harbour as well. To this comes the evidence for other harbours, mainly from seventeenth-century sources, for example Gluss, Gunnister Voe, Skelda Voe, Hillswick, Bigton, Burra, Lerwick,[38] and "Ness up Swineburchovet" (a headland near Sumburgh Head)[39] on Mainland.[40] On Willem Blaeu's map from

35 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: defense of Gerdt Breker, 7 February 1558 (15580207BRE00). See *SD 1195–1579*, pp. 73–74.

36 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 118 (15590906BRA00).

37 See Section 4.2.3.

38 Lerwick might also be the harbour mentioned by Sinclair as "Brussund", which probably refers to Bressay Sound, the water separating the islands Bressay and Mainland. Lerwick is located on its western shore. The town Lerwick, however, only came to existence in the course of the seventeenth century.

39 This was the harbour where Gerdt Hemeling surrendered his ship to the Earl of Bothwell in 1567 (see Section 3.7). It might be the same – unidentified – bay as "Watts Ness", which appears in the Sound Toll registers in 1663 as port of origin of a Bremen ship on its way into the Baltic, and as the "Gruting Voe" mentioned by Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 75n50.

40 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 91; Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 14.

Het Licht der Zee-vaert (1608) we find the name "Hamburger haven ofte Bremerhaven" ('Hamburg or Bremen harbour') in a bay in southern Mainland, which might be the bay near Levenwick in the parish Dunrossness.[41] Sinclair's "Drostenes" might therefore refer to this bay, or to a bay near Sumburgh Head, the southernmost tip of Mainland. Descriptions of Scottish captains from 1633 and 1680 refer to the Pool of Virkie near Sumburgh Head as "Hambrough Haven" or "Dutch Pool" as well.[42] Altogether we therefore know the names of about twenty possible harbours in Shetland. Combined with the estimation that about ten to twelve merchants were trading in Shetland in normal years during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this lends further weight to the observation derived from Olave Sinclair's testimony that not all harbours were in use all the time.[43]

Evidence from building remains and still-existing buildings, as well as archaeological surveys, further complicates the picture. In 1626, Simon Harriestede from Hamburg is mentioned in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne on the ship of Jacob Surman, who sailed to "Husselwick in Papoien" in Shetland. Shetland court records from 1602 show that "Orne Meir" (possibly Hans Meyer) from Hamburg, a merchant in Gluss, forced Harriestede, who was trading in the harbour Gunnister Voe at the time, to go to the island of Papa Stour, because Harriestede was too close to Meir's harbour.[44] "Papoien" probably refers to Papa Stour, so that "Husselwick" then probably indicates the bay Housa Voe on the east side of the island. Housa Voe, however, is not very suitable for anchoring a ship due to its shallow depth and sandy seafloor. Archaeological surveys hint at two possible German booths on Papa Stour in the northern and

41 Mehler and Gardiner, "On the Verge of Colonialism", 9; Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 91n630. On a later Dutch map by Jacob Lootsman and Casparus Lootsman, *Nieuw' en groote Loots-Man Zee-Spiegel* . . . (Amsterdam, 1670), the harbour is called "Hamborgerhaven, Bremerhaven ofte Muyshol". The latter literally means 'mouse hole', which is probably a Dutch corruption of the Shetlandic *mooshol* ('mossy hollow'). It is unknown why the bay is called that, but a path known as Mooshol Gaet still exists in the area, which connects the beach of Levenwick with the settlement higher up the hill to the west. It could possibly have referred to a boggy area or stream near the bay where the merchants could obtain fresh water. The author would like to thank Brian Smith and Philipp Grassel for this information.

42 Nigel D. Melton, "A Possible 17th-Century Scottish Merchants' Booth at Eastshore, Dunrossness, Shetland", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 134 (2004): 491–497. Melton notes that the 1680 testimony referred to the Hamburg merchants in the past tense, which fits with the lack of evidence for German trade near Sumburgh Head in the second half of the seventeenth century.

43 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 14.

44 *CBS 1602–1604*, 16–17. See also Section 4.4.2.

southern bays of Culla Voe and Hamna Voe, which is supported by local tradition. Close to the latter bay is a small lake called Dutch Loch, which lends further support to the claim that German traders used the area.[45] Archaeological evidence of trading activity has only been found on three sites near the southern tip of Mainland, near Grutness Voe and the Pool of Virkie. The finds date from the seventeenth century and might therefore be associated with Scottish traders,[46] but it is also possible that one of the sites was the "Ness up Swineburchovet" mentioned by Gerdt Hemeling in 1567.

We might therefore conclude that the "main harbours" mentioned by Olave Sinclair in 1563 were places where a ship could anchor rather than where trading was conducted. This conclusion is buttressed by the fact that the names of many of them refer to bodies of water (*-wage*, *-vorde*), and/or were the harbours available at the time. However, this says nothing about the actual use of trading places. Licences were probably issued by exception rather than rule, and a merchant covered a wide area around the harbour in a boat, serving places on the shore where they might have had a booth. As Hance D. Smith proposes, the location of the harbours was probably based on the physical suitability for mooring a ship, whereas the location of the booths was more connected to fishing activity.[47] Such a division is also indicated by a contract from 1709, which speaks of "eightein booths, ports and strands wher the fishing are made", and separately "severall ports wher the ships used to lye" during the time merchants from Hamburg and Bremen traded in Shetland.[48]

Who traded where was probably regulated among the merchants themselves, and their ranges of commercial activity could overlap, although in cases of heated conflict the local court or the foud would intervene.[49] This also makes it very difficult to pin down the activity of traders from certain cities or countries to specific harbours, as Philipp Grassel has noted.[50] As we have seen, Blaeu referred to the bay in southern Mainland as "Hamburger haven ofte Bremerhaven", indicating that it was used by both Hamburg and Bremen merchants. This also makes it difficult to compile an extensive overview of Shetland harbours analogous to the overview of Iceland harbours in Section 6, and only some general observations can be made here. Bremen merchants, for example, seem to have been

45 Jill Campbell et al., "A Report on Preliminary Work on Papa Stour, Shetland", *OITIS Field Report*, No. 1, 2010.

46 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 92.

47 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 15.

48 Shetland Archives, Lerwick, SC12/53/1, p. 339 (17090214SHE00).

49 See Section 4.4.2.

50 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 93–94.

exceptionally active around the northern islands of Unst, Yell, and Fetlar, whereas the region around Papa Stour and the Northmavine peninsula seem to have been frequented by Hamburg merchants (notably Simon Harriestede) around the turn of the sixteenth century.

5.3 Harbours in the Faroe Islands

As usual, the evidence for the Faroes is very thin, but what we do have seems to suggest that the use of harbours was strikingly different than in Shetland and Iceland. There is no contemporary written evidence about any particular trading place in use during the time that the Germans sailed to the Faroes. In his description of the Faroes from 1673, the Danish vicar Lucas Debes wrote that Hamburg merchants were active in the Faroes before merchants from Bergen, but he does not mention where they were trading.[51] It is likely that they had a storehouse on Tinganes, the headland in the harbour of the current capital Tórshavn. This site was also the location of the Løgting, the traditional centre of power on the islands, and is known to have been used as a trading centre by the Danes in later times.

Another possible location of a trading station is suggested by archaeological evidence from the ruins at Krambatangi (meaning the 'headland with the shop or booth') in Trongisvágsfjörður on the remote southern island of Suðuroy (Figure 5.4). Some small remains, such as bricks and an early seventeenth-century German Werra ware ceramics fragment, were found in the small building. Local tradition and the find of a fragment of a crucifix in seventeenth-century Dutch style on the beach nearby in 1913 suggest that the site was used by Dutch or German traders in the seventeenth century, and possibly before.[52]

5.4 Booths and other buildings

Drawings from Danish trading stations on Iceland from the eighteenth century (Figures 6.4 and 6.8) show buildings constructed on the shore by merchants that were used to conduct trade and store commodities. The written sources

51 Lucas Jacobson Debes, *Faeroernes beskrivelse, ed. Jørgen Rischel*, reduced facsimile of the 1673 edition (Kobenhavn, 1963), 227; Cf. Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home", 179; Arge, "Aspects of Hanse Archaeology", 278.

52 Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home", 181–184.

Figure 5.4: Map of Faroese places mentioned in the text.

about the North Atlantic trade regularly indicate that the German merchants constructed such buildings at their trading stations as well. However, it is for the most part unclear what they looked like or how exactly they were used. They are usually only mentioned in passing in the written documents; the rather vague terms used, 'tents' (*gezelte*), 'booths' (*buden*) or 'houses' (*heuser*), might signify anything from the smallest temporary structures to larger solid constructions intended for long-term use.

On Olaus Magnus's *Carta Marina* (1539), we can see small tents on the southern coast of Iceland near a harbour called "Ostrabord", where a Bremen ship lies at anchor (Figure 1.3), as well as small buildings, which probably signify a settlement, as is the case in other regions on the map. A similar image is used in his *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555), where he describes the

Figure 5.5: The harbour "Ostrabord" in Iceland with a trading ship, lighter boat, a pile of stockfish, and tents on the shore. From Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555). "Ostrabord" is not known as a harbour from written sources, but as the same harbour is displayed on the Carta Marina (1539) east of the Vestmannaeyjar ("Vespeno") and associated with Bremen merchants, it is likely that the harbour called "Ostforde" is meant here, i.e. the region around Berufjörður (see Section 6.6.3).

Icelandic stockfish trade (Figure 5.5).[53] It is unknown whether Magnus intended to display the tents of foreign merchants here, as he does not explain them or mention buildings of foreign merchants in any other way, but it is significant that the same structures appear in the picture where he explains the barter trade in Lapland and around the Bothnian Gulf (Figure 4.3).[54] Dithmar Blefken wrote that the German merchants in Hafnarfjörður had tents that they used as shops.[55] Moreover, a complaint from Bremen about Hamburg interference in their business in Kumbaravogur mentions that the Hamburg merchants came in 1563 for three days to the harbour, *set up their tents*, and conducted trade there.[56] It is

53 Magnus, *Historia* 21:3, p. 1085.

54 Magnus 4:5, p. 201; 20:2, p. 1032.

55 "Habent Germani, qui in Islandia negotiantur, locum in portu Haffnefordt natura munitum, ubi sub tentoriis suas merces venum exponunt". Blefken, *Island*, 40. Note that Blefken copied much of his information from Olaus Magnus. See Section 1.1.

56 "So sein doch [. . .] im nehest vorschienen 63ten jare, etzliche Hamburgische kauffleute, [. . .] drey tage, in solcher have gelegenn, [. . .] one einig gesprech, mit iren schiffe zu inen eingelauffen, ire gezelte daselbst trotzlich auffgeschlagen, und ire kauffmanschafft und hendell, [. . .] aldar gebraucht und wahrgenhomen." *DI* 14:161 (15640226BRE00).

therefore well imaginable that in new and uncertain situations (the Hamburg merchants in the example had apparently never been to Kumbaravogur before), tents or tent-like structures were used to conduct trade.

For longer-term trade, however, pains were taken to erect more-permanent structures, which could be used for more than one trading season, and in which goods not sold could be stored during the winter. Multiple sources testify of this practice. For example, Stefan Loitz complained in 1563 that his servant had not been able to sell all the goods he had brought to Iceland, and had therefore left them in the booth.[57] In 1567, Bremen merchants claimed that they had built booths on the beach in the harbour of "Ostforde", which they used to store the commodities for their business.[58] In a dispute between the two former trading partners Bernd Losekanne and Christoffer Meyer from Bremen in the same harbour in 1575, Losekanne stated that according to Icelandic custom, when the Germans left the island, Meyer had locked the booth and handed the keys over to the neighbours. The sheriff Eiríkur Árnason later took a barrel of iron from the booth that he had bought from Losekanne earlier but had not picked up.[59] This custom should certainly be seen in light of the attempts of the authorities to prevent the winter stay of foreigners in Iceland, which had led to so much conflict in the 1540s. Through the transfer of the keys to Icelanders, the authorities made sure that no foreigners stayed in the building or used it for trading in winter.

Even in summer, the booths were probably not used for spending the night, but some of the crew must always have stayed on the ship, as the attack of German traders on the English ship in 1532 indicates.[60] Skippers or merchants, however, might have slept in the booths occasionally. To cite a case from Shetland, Gerdt Breker claimed in his statement regarding his alleged manslaughter of Cordt Hemeling, that after the fight the skipper had acted like nothing was amiss and had even helped Breker construct the booths on the land and the cabin in one booth for the skipper, indicating that the skipper

57 RAK D11, Pakke 30 (Suppl. II, 35): Annaberg, 13 May 1563 (15630513ANN00).

58 "daß sie zu undterhaltung der jetzgedachter havenn, dahselbst am strande ihre heuser, darinnen sie ihre guetter, zu ihrer notturfft zulegen hetten, [. . .] gebauwet". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint of 28 February 1567 (15670228BRE00); see *DI* 14:414.

59 "derwegen durch Christoffer Meyers jetzige eigene adharenn und consorten in die boden geschlagen, und den schlüßel mit dem schuldbuch dem nehesten nachbauer zu bewahren gegeben nach Islandischem gebrauch umb nachweisung, so unß in der seh schade ankeme, etc". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: defence of Losekanne, 6 February 1576 (15760206BRE00).

60 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 109. See Section 3.3.

spent the night there.[61] Whether this was common practice or not is hard to determine.[62]

In Shetland, the premises of the German merchants served not only as storage and accommodation space, but also as production sites for salted fish. In the seventeenth century, documents mention the use of the beach and the rocks near the booths for drying fish upon them (the so-called *ayres*). For example, a 1664 contract confirms the acquisition of a piece of land in Haroldswick in Unst by Bremen merchant Hendrick Detken ("Hendrie Dicken") to build a booth upon, "togidder with libertie of the staines, aire and ground for wineing and dryeing of fisch their upon".[63] Likewise, the sale of a booth formerly belonging to a German merchant in 1705 includes the "fish aires".[64]

5.4.1 Construction

Booths were usually constructed and owned by the merchants themselves or their *maschup*. Many documents regarding disputes mention the great expense of constructing booths, such that abandoning them after having lost access to a certain harbour represented a significant financial loss in its own right, on top of not being able to reclaim debts. This argument was for example put forward by the Bremen merchants in Berufjörður during their dispute with Hamburg merchants in 1591;[65] by the heirs of Johan Munsterman, who wished to continue to sail to Kumbaravogur after he died in a shipwreck in 1580;[66] by Bremen merchants Herman Detken and Jasper Busing in Shetland in 1653, when they saw their business threatened by the war between the Dutch Republic and England;[67] and by Anna, the widow of Hans Delmenhorst from Lübeck, who had the right to

61 "do myn principal [i.e. Gerdt Breker] de boden up dat landt tymmerde, des gelyken de koien yn der boden, vor den schypper". SAB 2-R.11.kk.: complaint of Gerdt Breker, 1 February 1559 (15590201BRE00); see *SD 1195–1579*, pp. 73–74.

62 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 75.

63 NRS RS44/4, ff. 127–128.

64 NRS RS45/6/2, f. 769r.

65 "lenger dan fur achtzig jaren continue nach einander auff konigliche concession besiegelt, ihre heuser und buden, die da noch auf stehen, gebawett". RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): summary of petitions about the Berufjörður dispute, 1591 (15910000BRE00).

66 "Dan wir in der have unsere heusere in volligem gebawte sthen". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint of Johan Munsterman's heirs against Joachim Kolling, 12 April 1580 (15800412BRE00).

67 "sie und ihre vorfahren von langen jahren hero in der insell Hittland ihre bohden auffgebauwett". SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Bremen petition to the States General, 28 February 1653 (16530228BRE00).

use the harbour of Hólmur in Iceland, in 1589.[68] In the latter case, we know the value of the booth, which was sold to Luder Ottersen in 1593 for 20 Reichsthaler, a sum which Pierre Jeannin characterised as "modest", so maybe Anna was exaggerating about the great expense of building the booth.[69] In the case that a *maschup*[70] was sold or modified, the right to use the booth associated with it was often sold as well, as in 1557, when Christoffer Meyer from Bremen sold his part of the company in Shetland to his former companion Hinrick Sprenger.[71]

On Shetland, landowners entering the trade in the seventeenth century began to build booths themselves and rent them to merchants.[72] Merchants had already been paying fees for the use of their own booths and shore facilities, as well as for harbours.[73] In one case from 1602–1604, captain Thomas Knightson, servant of Earl Robert Stewart, constructed a booth in Aith in Bressay on behalf of German merchant Tonnies Schneman and made the latter's debtors pay the building cost of 100 gulden.[74] According to John Brand in 1701, it was highly profitable for landowners to construct booths for merchants, "for some of them will get twenty dollars *per annum* for the use of a house in the summer season to be a booth; and I think twice or thrice the sum will build them".[75]

This does not seem to have occurred in Iceland and the Faroes, although one remark in a Hamburg complaint pertaining to the dispute between the governor of Iceland and the Hamburg merchants about the winter stay in 1550 seems to imply that in Iceland booths could be rented from landowners as well. The Hamburg representatives stated that governor Lorentz Mule had "also [punished] the landowners (*hausbunde*) from whom the housing was rented".[76] However, this could also refer to the servants remaining during winter, who might have rented living space from Icelanders.

Despite the claims that booths were expensive to build, most of them seem to have been of only semi-permanent quality, with construction costs kept possibly

68 "etzliche heuser, zwar mit grosser unkostung gebawet". RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22): complaint of Anna, 28 October 1589 (15891028LUB00).

69 AHL Niederstadtbuch, 24-9-1593; Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 359.

70 See Section 7.2.1.

71 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 108 (15570514BRE00).

72 Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade*, 16.

73 Smith, 39.

74 *CBS 1602–1604*, 153–154. Schneman was unlawfully imprisoned by Knightson when he was not able to pay the specified cost for the construction of the booth: see Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 66.

75 Brand, *Brief Description*, 798.

76 "Auch die hausbunde von denen die behausung gemittitt". *DI* 11:644 (15500000HAM00).

low. It is likely that the foreign merchants constructed their buildings in the local fashion. In Iceland this means that they were largely constructed of turf, and merchants only had to bring wood for structural elements and the roof. This is suggested by the fact that in the account books of both Clawes Monnickhusen and the Oldenburg merchants, the sale of an entire booth to an Icelander is recorded.[77] In both cases, there is no sign that the merchants intended to cease trading in Iceland; it is possible that what actually changed hands were the (wooden) parts of the building, still in good enough condition to be reused for other purposes. The turf walls might have been restored and the roof renewed with timber brought from the continent. This appears also to have been the case when the timbers from the German church in Hafnarfjörður were sold as the church was being renovated in 1581 (see Section 5.4.3). Finally, in 1594 Oldenburg merchant Harmen Kloppenborg complained that he had gone to Nesvogur and found that his booths had been burned to the ground by Bremen merchant Hans Honne, who claimed to have a licence for the harbour and had started to construct his own booths.[78] If the booths had really been that costly to construct, one imagines Honne would have confiscated them instead of destroying them and building new ones.

In the latter case, however, there is a symbolic function to destroying the booth of the competitor, if one wanted to make a claim about the right to use a harbour. The same symbolism informed the directive of King Christian IV of Denmark to tear down all structures built by Germans in Iceland in 1608.[79] After all, the Danish traders might have made good use of the buildings after the Germans abandoned them – though there may not have been many still standing at that point. Concerned to keep the losses of the Icelandic trading ban as small as possible, merchants might have sold their booths or transported them back to Germany. In 1604, Hamburg merchants requested to sail one more year to Iceland, with one of the purposes being to pick up their booths.[80]

Mark Gardiner and Natascha Mehler suggest that the German booths in Iceland consisted of turf walls with a tent-like structure on top, which was left breached in winter,[81] but this does not seem likely if booths were used for

77 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch" (2001): 20–50 no. 113, p. 45 (15570000BRE00); SAO 262–1, no. 3, p. 44 (15850000OLD00).

78 NLO Best. 20, -25, no. 6: anonymous complaint, 26 August 1594 (15940826OLD00).

79 Ketilsson, *Kongelige Allernaadigste Forordninger*, 244.

80 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): March 1604 (16040312HAM00, 16040322HAM00).

81 Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 403–404. Their statement is based on Detlev Ellmers, *Frühmittelalterliche Handelsschiffahrt in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, Untersuchungen

storage in winter and locked. Finally, Baasch notes an entry in the account book of the confraternity of St Anne from 1534, which appears to suggest that a booth or house (*huss*) was constructed in Hamburg by a carpenter named Frerick and then transported to Iceland. Upon closer inspection, however, the note does not actually make clear whether the house was constructed in Hamburg or in Iceland.[82] The latter may be more likely, as ships usually had a carpenter on board,[83] as well as wood destined for sale in Iceland. Kurt Piper and Friederike Koch have suggested that this entry refers to the church that was constructed in Hafnarfjörður,[84] which makes more sense, as it was paid for by the confraternity of St Anne and not by a particular merchant or his *maschup*.

5.4.2 The archaeological evidence

In recent decades, attempts have been made to locate the ruins of the German booths, with mixed results. Local tradition on all the North Atlantic islands associates many ruins with the booths of foreign traders, as well as place names that refer to the presence of foreign merchants in the past. However, Christian IV's order to tear down the German buildings in Iceland, the construction of modern towns on trading sites, and the often-vague terms in the written sources make it difficult to connect a site to German merchants.[85]

In Iceland, a number of archaeological sites of trading stations are known that date from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, of which three have been partly excavated (Gásir, Gautavík, and Búðasandur in Hvalfjörður), but none of which can be directly linked with the trading sites known from the written sources. During geophysical prospecting in 2006, two sites named Kumbaravogur (which might mean 'the bay of the trading vessels') traditionally linked to

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aus dem Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesmuseum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Schleswig, dem Landesamt für Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Schleswig-Holstein in Schleswig und dem Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte an der Universität Kiel 3 (Neumünster, 1972), 215–217, who writes about Gásir in Eyjafjörður in the Early Middle Ages. Given the written evidence, this situation is unlikely to having been the case for the Late Middle Ages as well.

82 "Item noch hebbe ick uth gheven Frerick dem tymmerman vor dat huss tho makenn, dat in ysslant qwam in Haneforde". SAH 612-2/5, 1, vol. 1.

83 Holterman, "Ship Crews".

84 Piper, "Die Kirche der Islandfahrer", 228; Friederike Christiane Koch, "Die Stabkirche in Hafnarfjörður (Südwest-Island)", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 7.2 (2001): 52–53. See Section 5.4.3.

85 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 113.

German traders on either side of Breiðafjörður bay were surveyed; five other largely unexplored sites might be potential trading sites. At all of these sites are varying numbers of the rectangular ruins of buildings with turf walls lined with stones, which might be trading booths or boathouses (*naust*s).[86] Of these sites, the two that show the clearest connection with Hanseatic trading are Gautavík in Berufjörður[87] and Landey, a tidal islet near Kumbaravogur on Snæfellsnes, where in 2016 a trench was excavated through ruins believed to be of a German trading booth, which revealed a fireplace among other features. Analysis of ceramic fragments found on the latter site shows that they predominantly came from Bremen, which is in line with the picture from the written sources.[88] What the upper structure of these booths was like, however, can only be guessed at.

In Shetland, only single buildings are known, although written evidence suggests clusters of booths as well. For example, a 1671 map by John Seller refers to Laxfirth as "Bremerhaven" ('Bremen harbour') and shows a cluster of buildings on the shore with the caption "Bremer boedenn" ('Bremen booths') (Figure 5.6).[89] A document from 1614 was written in the "South Dutch booth at Uyeasound", which suggests that there were other booths in the same harbour.[90] According to John Brand in 1701, there were six German booths in Unst, whereas only two harbours are known there (Figure 5.3), so that there must have been more than one booth in each harbour.[91] A number of buildings still standing in Shetland are linked in local tradition with varying degrees of certainty to Hanseatic merchants in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. One is now a part of Busta House in Busta Voe, an eighteenth-century stone building.[92] Another is a small stone building known as the Pier House on the waterfront in the harbour of Symbister, Whalsay. It has two storeys, a hoist to transport goods into the house, and a chimney on the first floor, which might have served as living quarters (Figure 5.7). R. Stuart Bruce, a native of the island, stated that

86 Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites"; Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 158–164.

87 See Section 6.6.3.

88 These were analysed in 2017 by Torbjörn Brorsson and Natascha Mehler, who were kind enough to share their results with the author. See Section 6.3.5.

89 Shetland Archives SA6/398/57, possibly from the *English pilot*.

90 *SD 1612–1637*, no. 121.

91 "Several such Dutch booths are to be seen through the isles, as six ordinarily in the isle of Unst, two in Yell, &c". Brand, *Brief Description*, 797.

92 J. W. Tonkin, "Two Hanseatic Houses in the Shetlands", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 94 (1976): 81–82.

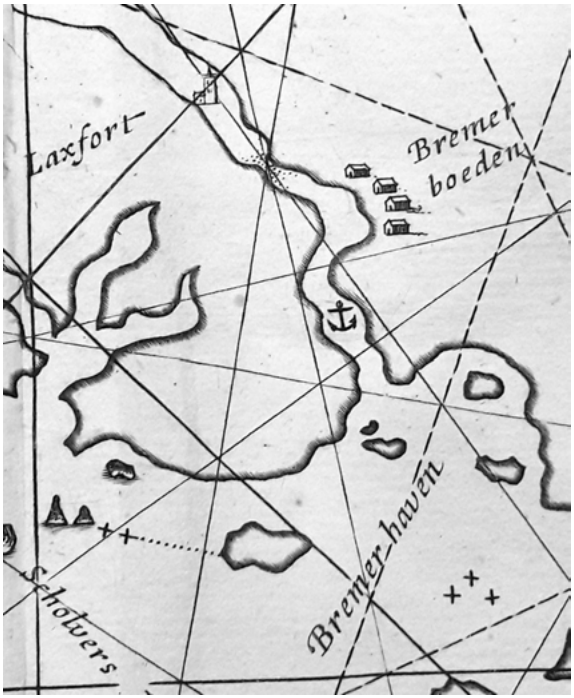

Figure 5.6: Map of Shetland by John Seller, 1671 (detail), with booths of Bremen merchants ("Bremer boedenn") in Laxfirth ("Bremerhaven").

it was used by Hamburg merchants, and that another building in the vicinity was the Bremen booth (*böd* in the Shetland dialect).[93] However, these buildings have seen substantial reconstruction over the intervening centuries, making it difficult to verify their alleged use as late medieval trading booths.[94]

A building that is better documented in the written sources is the so-called Greenwell's Böd in Uyeasound in Unst. Nowadays a ruin, the stone building on the waterfront consisted of two storeys, which were separately accessible from

93 R. Stuart Bruce, "Foreign Merchants in Shetland", *The Shetland News*, 11 March 1937; See also E. V. K. Brill, "Whalsay and the Bremen Connection", *Shetland Life*, March 1982, 10–17 and the reply of Brian Smith in a letter in the edition of June the same year.

94 Natascha Mehler, "Thing-, Markt- und Kaufmannsbuden im westlichen Nordeuropa. Wurzeln, Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede eines Gebäudetyps", in *Holzbau in Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Archäologie des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit 24 (Paderborn, 2012), 77.

Figure 5.7: The Pier House in the harbour of Symbister, Whalsay was allegedly built as a booth for Hamburg merchants. Photograph courtesy of Philipp Grassel.

the outside, not unlike the Pier House in Symbister. It is linked to the Scottish merchant William Bruce, who acquired a piece of land "commonly callit the Dutch quoy [i.e. the German enclosure] or quoy of Sound" on the west side of the bay in 1646.[95] The name of the piece of land on which the booth was built was thus connected to German commercial activity in the harbour. The connection to German merchants is further confirmed in a sale contract from 1705, in which Lawrence Bruce sold the booth formerly owned by the deceased William, together with a booth formerly owned by Dirick Kuning from Bremen.[96] Although the document does not state in which harbour the latter booth was located, the wording suggests that it was a similar kind of building. However, as with the Pier House in Symbister, it is impossible to say whether Greenwell's Böd was actually the booth used by German merchants or one constructed later on the same site.

Archaeological excavations have not provided more certainty. Remains of the so-called Hagrie's Böd in Gunnister were excavated in 2008. The name is possibly a corruption of the last name of the Hamburg merchant Simon Harriestede, who was active in the area around 1600.[97] Most of the building was eroded and

95 Gardie House Archives, Bressay, bi/161: Uyea, 21 May 1646; transcription kindly provided by John Ballantyne. According to a note of the antiquarian James Thomas Irvine, based on a 1771 survey of the scattald marches of Unst, Segebad Detken's booth was located on the west side of the burn (creek) of Scata Water, which is possibly the same site. National Museums of Scotland, DA 882 IRV, volume 2, consulted from SA4/2561/5, f. 119. The author wishes to thank Mark Gardiner for this information.

96 NRS RS45/6/2, f. 769r.

97 See Section 4.4.2.

only one corner had survived. It was shown that the building had been constructed with thick stone walls and once had a wooden flooring. However, the heavy erosion on the site and eighteenth-century finds below the floor level complicate the evidence for the use of this building by German merchants in the sixteenth century.[98]

Despite the lack of hard evidence linking the remains of trading booths in Shetland to German merchants, the differences with the archaeological remains in Iceland are striking. This goes especially for the use of stone walls in Shetland, which must have been expensive, even though the building material is available on the islands itself and did not have to be imported like timber, and thus hints at a long-term intended use of the buildings. Natascha Mehler has attributed this difference in construction technique to the absence of a licence system in Shetland, which gave merchants more long-term security that they would be able to continue using a certain harbour.[99] This seems plausible, but it should be noted that licences also provided security for merchants in defending their rights in a certain harbour against competitors. Moreover, in practice there was much continuity in the use of harbours in Iceland under the licence system, as we will see in further detail in Section 6. Licences changed hands only in a few cases; in most harbours, licences were issued to the same merchants or their associates for decades.

Another possible explanation for the stone booths in Shetland might be that landowners built them to rent out to merchants; a landowner could be reasonably sure that merchants would return each year, which made it sensible to invest in a more permanent form of construction. However, the 1664 sale contract of land in Haroldswick to Bremen merchant Hendrick Detken mentioned above includes the right "to build and big ane house or buith, ane or ma, [. . .] and to win staines, clay and mortar for the building thairof". This suggests that German merchants quarried local stone to build booths themselves as well.[100] The most plausible explanation might therefore be a general tendency to use stone (which was readily available on the islands) instead of timber (which was not) as building material in Shetland. Around 1600 it can be seen that the Scandinavian tradition of erecting wooden buildings had been abandoned in favour of the Scottish tradition of constructing buildings from stone.[101] As booths were probably erected in the local building tradition, the choice in Shetland would be stone.

98 Mark Gardiner and Natascha Mehler, "The Hanseatic Trading Site at Gunnister Voe, Shetland", *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 44, no. 2 (2010): 347–349.
99 Mehler, "Thing-, Markt- und Kaufmannsbuden", 77.
100 NRS RS44/4, ff. 127–128.
101 Donaldson, *Shetland Life*, 94–95.

However, as the existing remains of buildings do not date back further than the seventeenth century, and none of these can be linked conclusively to German merchants, it is impossible to say whether this was also the case for the sixteenth century.

On the Faroe Islands, only the remains of the trading booth in Krambatangi on Suðuroy are known. The original building, like those known from Shetlandic remains, had stone walls and a wooden flooring and measured about ten by four metres. Here as well, however, the dating is difficult and the oldest finds point at Dutch traders in the seventeenth century.[102] On Tinganes in Tórshavn no remains have been identified that might point to the presence of German merchants, because the site has been in constant use over the centuries and has been built on and redeveloped repeatedly.[103] However, Símun Arge has recently suggested that the buildings known as Leigubúðin and Munkastovan on Tinganes could have been built as merchant booths by the Hamburg traders. They differ from the rest of the wooden buildings on Tinganes in that their lower storeys were built of stone, and show similarities in terms of construction technique with the Shetland booths.[104] However, given their uncertain dating, the lack of documentary evidence, and the questionable attribution of the Shetland booths to German merchants, this must remain a mere suggestion.

Finally, comparison with finds in Norway will provide little insight, as Hanseatic merchants were allowed to settle in towns there, resulting in extensive trading districts and harbour constructions, for example at the site of the Hanseatic *Kontor* in Bergen. The challenges posed to the German merchants when constructing their buildings in Norway were therefore radically different from what the merchants faced on the North Atlantic islands.[105]

5.4.3 The German church in Hafnarfjörður

An exceptional building in the North Atlantic context is the church that was constructed by the Hamburg Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants. In the account books of the confraternity, the first certain entries for the construction of the church date from 1537,[106] although it would not be unlikely that

102 Mehler, "Thing-, Markt- und Kaufmannsbuden", 76; Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home", 181–184.
103 Arge and Mehler, "Adventures Far from Home", 179–180.
104 Arge, "Aspects of Hanse Archaeology", 278–281.
105 Mehler, "Thing-, Markt- und Kaufmannsbuden", 78–79.
106 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 110.

the "house" in Hafnarfjörður for which the carpenter Frerick was paid in 1534, also indicates the church or its predecessor.[107] The timing of this building activity is no coincidence. Since its founding in 1500, the confraternity had had a chapel in Hamburg, first in St John's monastery and later in the church of St Peter, which they had lost in 1535 because of the introduction of the Reformation in the city.[108] Moreover, this was the time when Hamburg was at the peak of its influence in Denmark and had the least to fear that the Icelandic trade would be banned again soon. Baasch's characterisation of the construction of the church as a "bold enterprise" because of the uncertain position of foreign merchants in Iceland therefore deserves some nuance.[109]

The church was probably torn down after Christian IV's directive in 1608 that all German buildings in Iceland must be demolished, and its remains are hidden below the modern town of Hafnarfjörður. Therefore, we have only very limited information about what the church looked like and where it was located. The account book of the confraternity of St Anne mentions only that it stood on the southern shore of the bay, possibly on Óseyri (Figure 6.3).[110] During reconstruction of the harbour in the 1940s, human bones were found on the former tidal islet Háigrandi, which were believed by many to have come from the German churchyard.[111]

The entries in the account and donation registers of the confraternity do give us some idea about the construction of the church. There are many entries for money spent on wood for the church or given to carpenters, and one in 1543 for money paid to the copper smith for copper and nails for the church. Apparently the church was made of wood and roofed in copper in 1543. Donations from later years for tar or of the money received from the sale of wood from the church indicate frequent repairs, including probable larger renovations in 1581 and 1589, when donations were also given for the carpenters

107 Piper, "Kirche der Islandfahrer", 228. Koch, "Stabkirche", 53n3 observes that another entry in the donation register mentions the church as "hus edder kercken in der Haneforde" ('house or church in Hafnarfjörður') (SAH 612-2/5, 2, vol. 1, f. 306).

108 Piper, "Annenkapelle", 167–175; "Beziehungen der Islandfahrer", 179. See Section 7.1.1.2.

109 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 109.

110 "Item noch hebbe dem predycanten geven ut bevel der older lude to os ynd ßuderende 6s"; vol. 2, f.63v (1580): "Item entffangen van Matteiges pape dat he makth in Yslant 1 elle bredt up dem karckhave an der suderßit in der Haneforde". SAH 612-2/5, 1, vol. 1, f. 327 (1553); cited after Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 29n123.

111 Ásgeir Guðmundsson, *Saga Hafnarfjarðar* 1908–1983, vol. 1 (Hafnarfjörður, 1983), 14; Kurt Piper, "Kirkja Hamborgarmanna í Hafnarfirði", *Árbók Hins íslenzka fornleifafélags* 66 (1969): 130. See also Section 6.2.6.

Figure 5.8: Statue of the Virgin Mary with Child and St Anne, from the church in Holt, Önundarfjörður. Image courtesy of Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, inv. no. 2069/1882-29.

who worked on the church.[112] Donations were made for the inventory and liturgical objects as well: there are entries for a baptismal font (1538), a bell (1539), a parchment book of psalms (1540), a paper book for the mass (1541), a second parchment book (1544), a liturgical vestment (1549), wax candles (1573–75), and a pall (*sarcklaken*) (1574, 1587), although the latter might also have been used for funerals in Hamburg.[113] According to Kurt Piper, the inventory of the former chapel of the confraternity in the church of St Peter in Hamburg was not

112 "Van dussen Ic und X vischen gegeven den timmerluden van vorbeteringe der karcken". SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 266r (1581); Piper, "Kirche der Islandfahrer", 228; Koch, "Stabkirche".

113 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00).

reused, but sold to Icelanders in 1536, who were still Catholic at that time.[114] A wooden statue of St Anne with Mary and the baby Jesus (*Annen Selbdritt*) in the National Museum in Reykjavík (Figure 5.8) might be a remnant of this inventory.[115]

The church was predominantly used by Hamburg merchants in Hafnarfjörður for religious services, but also as a community building.[116] It is for example significant that when governor Lorentz Mule wanted to proclaim the regulations and royal ordinances about the Icelandic trade in 1548, he did so in the church in Hafnarfjörður.[117] The Hafnarfjörður merchants are the only ones who appear in the donation register as having spent fish on behalf of the church in Iceland (*kerckenfisch*).[118] However, the church might also have been used by Hamburg merchants from harbours on the Reykjanes peninsula nearby, such as Keflavík, Vatnsleysa/Straumur, or Hvalfjörður, with whom the Hafnarfjörður merchants are known to have cooperated closely. There is no evidence for the use of the church by Bremen merchants, other Germans, or Icelanders, although the donations for a baptismal font might indicate that local children were baptised there. In other places in Iceland, as well as in Shetland and the Faroe Islands, German merchants probably used local churches, as various gravestones and liturgical objects donated by Germans testify.[119]

114 Piper, "Geschichte der Annenkapelle", 173. It is unclear on which source Piper bases this statement.

115 Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, Reykjavík, inv. no. 2069/1882-29. The work is thought to originate in Hamburg, *c*. 1513. It came from the church in Holt in Önundarfjörður in the Westfjords, the same church that housed the baptismal font donated by Roleff Eys (see Section 4.5). Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 29.

116 Piper, "Kirche der Islandfahrer", 230–231.

117 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 213; Piper, "Kirche der Islandfahrer", 231; Koch, "Stabkirche", 52.

118 See Section 7.1.1.2.

119 See Section 4.5.

6 Overview of harbours in Iceland

The following sections will discuss specific harbours in Iceland in detail. To facilitate comparison, it will follow the same structure as Jón Aðils's overview of Icelandic harbours during the Danish trade monopoly, which follows the coastline of Iceland in clockwise direction, starting with the Vestmannaeyjar in the southwest. The reader looking for a more condensed overview of the trading places in Iceland may wish to begin with the general discussion of Icelandic harbours in Section 5.1 and the timeline of Icelandic harbours supplied with the printed book or downloadable as additional online material at https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-018 or with Appendix A, which contains overviews of the licences issued from 1565 onwards. Much of the overview here is based on the licences and the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne in Hamburg, which usually have not been referenced in the footnotes. In these cases, the appropriate references can be found in the appendices.

6.1 Vestmannaeyjar

Names in the sources: Vespenøøe; Wespene; Wespeno; Wespenow

The Vestmannaeyjar ('Westman Islands') are a group of 14 small islands off the southwestern coast of Iceland, southeast of the Reykjanes peninsula. Only the largest of these islands, Heimaey, was and is inhabited. In the northern part of this island is a bay on which the trading station in the islands in Danish times and likely before was located, with buildings erected on the bay's southern shore. The tiny size of the islands contrasts sharply with their importance as a trading site, which was due to the rich fishing grounds that surround them. Each winter, large numbers of fishermen would flock here from the mainland to fish and then sell their catch to foreign merchants the following summer. Historical sources report that the fishing was sometimes so good here that some portion of the catch could not be processed and had to be thrown away.[1]

The Vestmannaeyjar have a history that is quite distinct from that of the rest of Iceland. They were often treated separately by the Danish crown, especially after the islands became the personal property of the king in 1420.[2] During the

1 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 279–281; P. E. Kristian Kålund, *Bidrag til en historisk-topografisk Beskrivelse af Island*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen, 1877), 278–279.

2 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 180.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-006

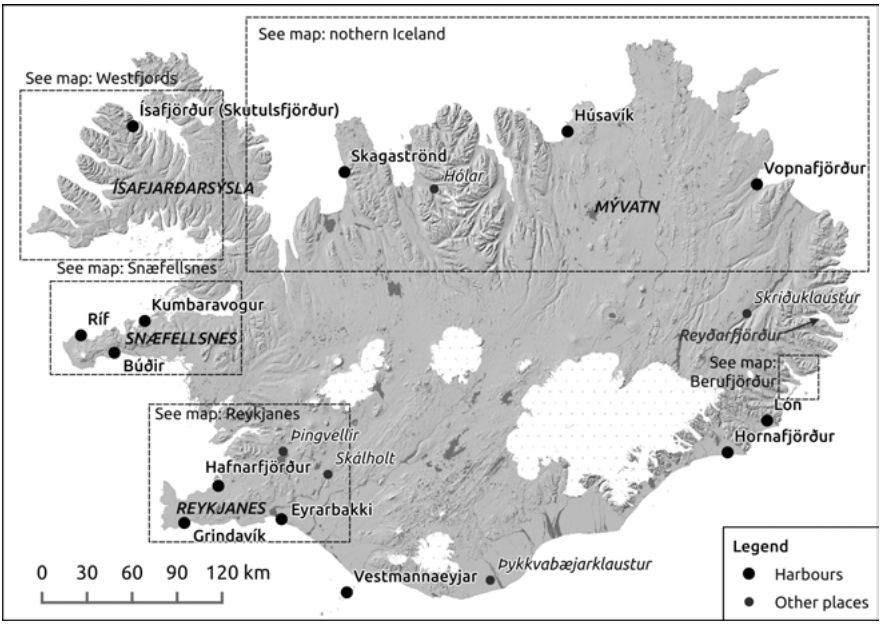

Figure 6.1: Map of Icelandic harbours and other places mentioned in the text. For the detail maps, see Figure 6.2 (Reykjanes); Figure 6.5 (Snæfellsnes); Figure 6.12 (Westfjords); Figure 6.13 (northern Iceland); and Figure 6.14 (Berufjörður).

Danish trade monopoly, the islands were often licensed under different conditions than the other harbours on the mainlland.[3] In earlier times, one of the most important harbours for the English merchants was located on the islands, who built a stronghold and houses here in the fifteenth century. In the wake of the conflicts with German merchants in the 1530s, the English concentrated their Icelandic activities in the Vestmannaeyjar until around 1558, when the islands were given to Simon Surbeck, who later became burgomaster of Copenhagen. He was able to limit the influence of the English, although they appeared regularly throughout the rest of the century.[4] Afterwards, the islands continued to be leased

3 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 279–280.

4 Þorsteinsson, "Island", 187; Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 179–180; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 48–52.

to Danish merchants, one of whom served as the sheriff there; the merchants appointed a deputy who would stay in winter.[5]

Curiously, there is hardly any evidence for German activity on the islands, except in the years 1547 and 1548, when Hamburg merchant Joachim Wullenwever received the right to trade there. However, the Hamburg merchants who sailed for Wullenwever, led by merchant Hans Wegener, ran into many difficulties as their presence coincided with the lease of Iceland to Copenhagen in 1547. That year they arrived in the islands too late to trade and had to leave their goods there, only to find when they returned the following year that their goods had been confiscated by the new governor Lorenz Mule. To make matters worse, Hans Wegener and his servants were kidnapped by English merchants and taken to England, allegedly on the orders of Mule.[6] Although the dispute between Copenhagen and the Hamburg merchants was settled in 1551, there seems to have been no further activity of German merchants on the Vestmannaeyjar.

6.2 Southwestern Iceland: Reykjanes peninsula and surroundings

Alongside Vestmannaeyjar and Snæfellsnes, the fishing grounds around the Reykjanes peninsula were among the best in Iceland. Moreover, almost all important administrative centres were located in the southwestern part of the island, such as the royal farm of Bessastaðir, where the governor was seated; the site of the annual Althing in Þingvellir; and the bishopric of Skálholt. It is therefore not surprising that this area was the focus of German activity in Iceland: it was marked by the highest density of sites of both trading and of conflict with English traders and the Danish authorities.

6.2.1 Eyrarbakki / Þorlákshöfn

Names in the sources:

Eyrarbakki: Ohrbach; Oerback; Orbackhaffen; Ørneback

5 These were: in 1558, Simon Surbeck; in 1582, Jørgen Kydt; in 1583, Niels Sørensen; in 1586, Oluf Matzen (all from Copenhagen); and in 1590, Poul Pedersen (Aarhus). Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 46–47, 279; on the royal Danish trade in the Vestmannaeyjar, see Pétur G. Kristjánsson, "Tengsl framleiðslu og markaðar. Konungsumboðið í Vestmannaeyjum og utanlandsverslun Íslendinga á síðari hluta 16. aldar" (Master's thesis, Háskoli Íslands, 2008).

6 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2: complaints from 1549/1550 (15490000HAM00, 15500000HAM03).

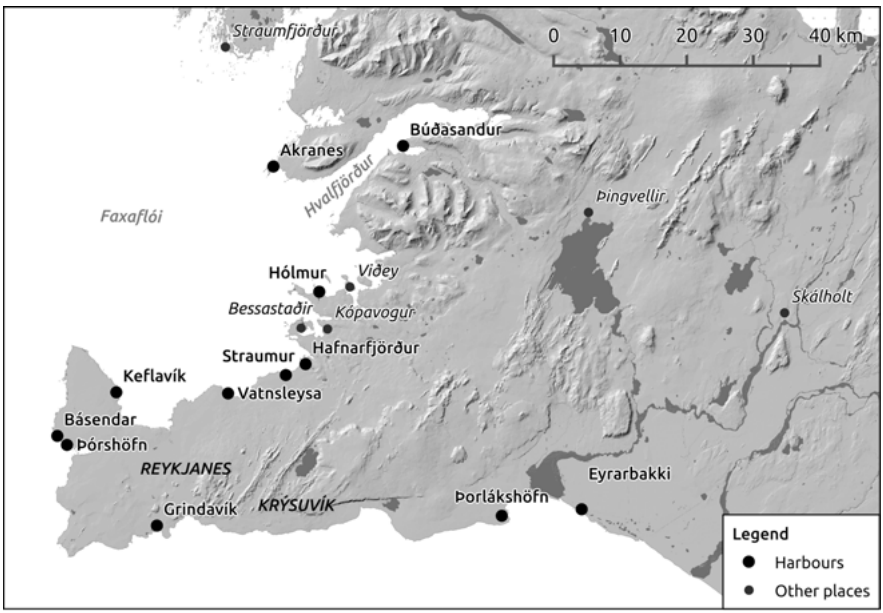

Figure 6.2: Map of trading sites and other locations around the Reykjanes peninsula. See Figure 6.1 for location.

Þorlákshöfn: Thorlagshaffen; Thorlakshaffe; Thorlangs hafe; Thorlaxhaffen; Torlakeshaven

Eyrarbakki, located near the mouth of the River Ölfusá, was one of the few harbours on the southern coast of Iceland. It served as the trading place for the diocese of Skálholt, which is about 40 km inland. Before 1361, the place was known as Eyrar, which referred to the entire stretch of coast between the two rivers Ölfusá and Þjórsá, about 20 km long. After 1386, it became known as Eyrarbakki, with the main harbour at the farm Einarshöfn, which belonged to the church in Skálholt, close to the modern town of Eyrarbakki.[7]

Eyrarbakki was associated with the largest district of all harbours in Danish times, a district that covered almost the entire southern coast east of the harbour.[8] Due to the many farmers in this area, Eyrarbakki was known in Danish times as both a butcher's and a fish harbour. German and Danish merchants in Eyrarbakki, however, were mostly interested in fish products. Except for a short

7 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 169; Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:174–75; Vigfús Guðmundsson, *Saga Eyrarbakka*, vol. 1 (Reykjavik, 1945), 23–31.
8 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 281.

period in the early eighteenth century, livestock from the region was probably brought to Hafnarfjörður to be butchered and sold as meat.[9]

The location along the unprotected southern beach presented difficulties for those wanting to use the harbour. Not only was the harbour notoriously hard to navigate, with a ship often having to wait for days for the right winds to enter, but it was small as well, only able to accommodate one ship at a time.[10] In addition, the buildings on the shore east of the harbour were in frequent danger of flooding. Seventeenth-century descriptions from the site speak of a large storehouse of the bishop erected on poles and many (fishing) booths, which were moved at the end of the seventeenth century because of the flooding.[11]

As a trading place for the bishop of Skálholt, the bishop's own ship is mentioned as using the harbour every now and then between 1280 and 1520.[12] Afterwards the bishop seems to have traded mainly with Hamburg merchants, about whom we are quite well informed through the accounts of bishop Gizur Einarsson (1540–1548).[13] These show frequent interactions with German merchants in Hafnarfjörður (notably Hinrick Hintzke) and Eyrarbakki (Hans van Lubbeke).[14] The first certain mention of the presence of Hamburg merchants in Eyrarbakki is bishop Gizur's payment to Hans van Lubbeke for lime and bricks for the construction of two chimneys on the site in 1541 (possibly for a storage house), which Van Lubbeke promised to bring the next year.[15] It might be that Van Lubbeke was really from Lübeck and still had connections there, as in the 1551 accounts of Eggert Hannesson, Cordt Stael and Cordt Vebbeke are mentioned as Lübeck merchants in "Syderhaffen" ('southern harbour'), which might be Eyrarbakki.[16] The next year, Eggert's accounts mention the ship of Cordt Lunenberg from Hamburg in nearby Þorlákshöfn.[17]

9 Aðils, 281–282.

10 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:175; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 283.

11 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 169; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 284; Guðmundsson, *Saga Eyrarbakka*, 1:31–36.

12 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 169.

13 Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, AM 232 8vo: Bréfabók Gissurar biskups Einarssonar, 1540–1548. Most of these documents (of which there are many) have been published in *DI* 10.

14 Guðmundsson, *Saga Eyrarbakka*, 1:269. See also Sections 4.3.3 and 4.5.

15 "Item skrifad hans lubeck til vm ij ackeri, vm tigelstein og kalk suo sem til tueggia skorsteina ef hann uill biggia ad are komanda a eyrarbakka". *DI* 10:393.

16 *DI* 12:222; Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 17. Cordt Stael is also attested in the donation register of St Anne as a servant in Básendar in the 1540s.

17 *DI* 12:323.

In the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne, Eyrarbakki is mentioned for the first time in 1556, and from this point on it is usually the name of merchant Herman Wegener who is listed. With some certainty, ships from the donation register can be connected to Eyrarbakki until 1564 and from 1570 onwards until the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly. During the intervening years, Bremen merchants seem to have taken over the harbour. In 1567, they requested a licence for this harbour together with Berufjörður ("Ostforde"), Búðir, and Kumbaravogur, the only harbours the Hamburg merchants "had not driven them out [of] yet", thereby representing the temporary absence of Hamburg traders in Eyrarbakki in their own favour.[18]

However, a licence for Eyrarbakki, combined with Þorlákshöfn, was issued that same year to Johan Jellesen Falckner, Danish factor in Amsterdam, tasked with bringing sulphur from Iceland for the manufacture of gunpowder in Antwerp.[19] In 1571, Falckner's licence was renewed, with the provision that he was allowed to mine metals, sulphur, copper, or alum in the trading district. In March 1578, Luder Ottersen from Lübeck and Danish merchant Jørgen Kydt were granted the licence for ten years.[20] Kydt was appointed as a merchant on the royal ship sailing to Iceland for that year as well.[21] However, in the next year there is evidence for Herman Wegener having returned to the harbour to trade. The situation becomes clearer in 1586, when Herman Wegener requested a licence for Eyrarbakki and Þorlákshöfn himself, and promised to pay the tolls for the harbours separately. The reason to combine the licence for Eyrarbakki with that for Þorlákshöfn, a big farm located on the other side of the River Ölfusá renowned for the quality of its fishing grounds,[22] was that fish were not so abundant in Eyrarbakki.[23] However, it is unclear why Þorlákshöfn needed to be mentioned explicitly, especially for the double toll amount, as the

18 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Tyleman Zerneman, 26 September 1567 (15670926BRE00).

19 *KB* 1566–1570, 313; *DI* 14:415. Falckner appears earlier in the 1560s in relation to the Faroe Islands, when he was ordered by the king to supply goods for the fitting out of warships and stockfish to feed their crews: *KB* 1561–1565, 646; 1566–1570, 65. See also Sections 2.1.1.1 and 3.6.

20 *KB* 1576–1579, p. 325; Guðmundsson, *Saga Eyrarbakka*, 1:271–272.

21 On 5 September 1577. *KB* 1576–1479, p. 233.

22 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:83.

23 "dewile duße haffen unglick mit dem fischfang gesegnet, also bidden se dat ein paß up beide hafen up Herman Wegener gnedigst gestellet werde, darjegen sie i. kon. may. vor beide haffen insonderheit den tollen geven und entrichten willen, we bethero geschen."RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860213HAM00).

two harbours were close to one another and probably in the same trading district. Possibly the reason was that fish from Þorlákshöfn had been brought to merchants in Grindavík before, as it is also known from the Danish period.[24]

A list of harbours in use in Iceland compiled some years later for the German Chancery in Copenhagen mentions that Wegener (this time called Marten) sailed for Luder Ottersen to Eyrarbakki and Þorlákshöfn.[25] It is likely that Wegener had sailed for Ottersen and Kydt from 1579 onwards, and this proved to be an enduring arrangement. In November 1590, Luder Ottersen was granted the licence for Eyrarbakki and Þorlákshöfn for three years in his own name again, and a new licence (this time without mentioning Þorlákshöfn) was issued to him in January 1598 for another three years. Although there are no licences known for the period in between (1594–1597), Herman Wegener, and from 1595 to 1603 Andreas Wegener (probably Herman's brother or son), can be attested as having sailed to Eyrarbakki from the donation register. It is likely that they were sailing for Luder Ottersen the entire time.

6.2.2 Grindavík

Names in the sources: Grenewick; Grenwyck; Grindewich; Grindelwiecke; Grindewickeshave; Grindewigh; Grindvig; Gronewick; Grundewyck; Gryndewyck; Gunderwigk

Located on the southern coast of the Reykjanes peninsula, Grindavík was one of the three most important harbours for the English merchants in the fifteenth century.[26] Known in older times as Stadarsund, Stadarvik, or Stadarhavn, it was a notoriously difficult harbour to enter, especially when the wind was out of the south. Nor was it particularly sheltered: the custom of mooring the ships using the iron rings there did not prevent frequent shipwrecks, such as the first Danish ship to sail there in 1602. During certain periods, the Danes therefore sailed to nearby Básendar instead, and posted a merchant in Grindavík.[27]

24 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 287.

25 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 7): list of licensed harbours, 1584–1592 (15840000KOB00). The document also states that it was unclear whether Wegener actually received a licence. However, a note on his request (see note 23 above), does state that all Hamburg licences asked for in the document were granted. On the other hand, in 1586 Kydt and Ottersen's licence would still have been valid for two years.

26 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 180.

27 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 284–287; Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:40–41.

Grindavík was predominantly a harbour for stockfish produced on the southern coast of Reykjanes, its district encompassing only the harbour's immediate surroundings and those of neighbouring Krýsuvík in Danish times.[28] The Krýsuvík area was also known for sulphur mining, so it could well be that sulphur was also exported from Grindavík, although sources from the English period tell only of sulphur being brought to Straumur, on the northern coast of the peninsula.[29] Sulphur trade involving German merchants, however, is only known from the harbours in the north near the more-productive mines near Mývatn.

German merchants are not known to have used Grindavík in the early sixteenth century, possibly concentrating their business in nearby Básendar. It became the last stronghold for the English on the Icelandic mainland after they were largely driven out of Hafnarfjörður by the Germans. It is in Grindavík that 280 German merchants, led by bailiff Didrick van Minden, attacked the ship of John Breye and killed 15 men on board in 1532. The reason for this was Breye's alleged ill treatment of Icelanders and the theft of a quantity of stockfish that the German merchants in Hafnarfjörður had purchased.[30] In one of the documents produced by English ambassador Thomas Lee in Germany the next year, it is stated that "no Bremen or Hamburg ships were in the harbour called Grindavík at the time".[31]

After this incident, the English seem to have disappeared from Grindavík, but it is unclear if the harbour was used by German merchants continuously from that point onwards. Eggert Hannesson's accounts mention Bremen skipper Luder Kock as having been there in 1552,[32] and in 1556 a ship with skipper Reineke Grelle and merchants Arndt vam Hagen and Matthias Cordes is attested as having sailed to Grindavík in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne in Hamburg. This was probably an exception, as these three did not sail together in other years. In the winter of 1565/6, Herman Schomaker and Herman Krechting from Bremen applied for licences for Grindavík and Keflavík. They had sailed there the year before with two ships, one of which they had lost in the former harbour, "partly because of the dangerousness of the bad harbour", partly because of bad weather; they had managed to salvage most of their goods,

28 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 284–287.

29 Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 1:40–41.

30 *DI* 16:289 (15320000HAF00); *DI* 16:290 (15320718GRI00); *DI* 16:295 (15320823HAM01), 296 (15320901WIN00); Þorsteinsson, "Island", 182; Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 125; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 18–19.

31 "in quodam portu uocato Grenwyck ubi nulle Bremenses uel Hamburgenses naues eo tempore erant". *DI* 16:315 (15330200HAM01).

32 *DI* 12:323.

which they left in Iceland.[33] In the document, they state that their predecessors and relatives had sailed to Iceland as well, but had lost their ships during the siege of Bremen by imperial forces during the Schmalkaldic war in 1547, after which Hamburg merchants had taken over, thereby suggesting that they had the right to use these harbours by tradition.

However, from the wording of the document it remains unclear which harbour these earlier Bremen merchants used. The dating of these events in the mid-1560s might suggest that the Bremen merchants took advantage of the temporary absence of many Hamburg traders from Grindavík and Keflavík, as was the case with Eyrarbakki. However, the emphasis placed in the request on the licence for Keflavík might indicate that they most feared competition from Hamburg there. A Hamburg merchant did indeed receive a licence for Keflavík the next year, but to whom the licence for Grindavík was granted (assuming it was) is not known. Instead, in November 1571, Claus Lude from Bremen was granted a licence for Grindavík, suggesting that Bremen merchants lost access to Keflavík but remained active in Grindavík, and by extension that Hamburg merchants had probably not sailed to Gríndavík often before, as they did not try to re-establish their presence in that harbour after they sorted out their problems with the Danish king.

In February 1586, Bernd Osthoff from Hamburg received a licence for Grindavík. It is is probable that Bremen merchants had used the harbour prior to this year,[34] as the request in 1586 does not speak about a renewal, and Bernd Osthoff does not appear in the records of the confraternity of St Anne earlier. In October 1592, a request was made for the renewal of the licence, but now Paul Barnefeld was to hold it, because Osthoff himself would not sail to Iceland anymore, though he would remain active in the trade as a partner from Hamburg. The licence was granted, with the added name of Hans Steinkamp.[35] It may be that no ships sailed from Hamburg to Grindavík in 1591 and 1592, as Osthoff and Barnefeld do not appear in the donation registers in those years, and Hans Steinkamp only on a ship to Hólmur. Three years later, there is a request for the renewal of the licence for Hans Steinkamp, with Osthoff still being part of the company, and again in autumn of 1598. Paul Barnefeld seems to have left

33 "thom dele dorch geferlickheit der bosenn having". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15); SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15660329BRE00).

34 Claus Lude died in Iceland on 3 June 1585, and was buried in the church on Helgafell, Snæfellsnes, as his gravestone attests. See Figure 4.11, Section 4.5.

35 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15921022HAM00).

the company at that point, as he is mentioned as a former licence holder.[36] In December 1601, Steinkamp and Osthoff requested to sail one more year to Grindavík, even though their licence had expired, because the ship of skipper Hans Hare had wrecked near Helgoland on the way to Iceland, and therefore they could not trade that year.[37] The request was probably not granted, as Copenhagen merchants are attested in Grindavík the following year; we do find Hans Steinkamp on a ship together with Andreas Wegener in 1602, which probably sailed to nearby Eyrarbakki, from where Steinkamp must have tried to reclaim some of his outstanding debts in Grindavík.

6.2.3 Básendar

Names in the sources: Bedtsand; Bothsandt; Borsann; Boteswane; Botsamhareve; Botyshawe; Bousann; Bussant; Paßanth; Posandh

Located in a bay with small skerries on the western tip of the Reykjanes peninsula, Básendar was a difficult harbour, especially when the winds were out of the west, and ships had to be moored to the skerries with iron rings. The trading station was in Danish times located on a low rock formation, surrounded by sand. This made the buildings vulnerable to spring floods: during a storm in 1799 all buildings were destroyed by the waves, and the site was subsequently abandoned. The remains of the trading station, including one of the mooring rings, are still visible and have been surveyed.[38] It is not entirely clear whether this was also the site of the German merchants' trading station. Kålund mentions that during the Hanseatic trading period, a neighbouring harbour to the south, called Þórshöfn, was used, although it is unclear on which source this is based.[39]

Wedged between Grindavík to the south and Keflavík to the north (Figure 6.2), Básendar covered only a small district with few inhabitants, yet it was one of the most important harbours for the winter fishing around Reykjanes. In a list of ten harbours offered to Hamburg in 1565, it is the second largest, requiring 30 lasts of flour annually, half the amount of Hafnarfjörður (Table 5.2). German merchants

36 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18b): requests of 23 June 1598 (15980623HAM00); 25 July 1598 (15980725HAM00).

37 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18b) (16011213HAM00).

38 Ragnheiður Traustadóttir, "Fornleifaskráning á Miðnesheiði / Archaeological Survey of Miðnesheiði", Rannsóknaskýrslur 2000 (Reykjavík, 2000), 18–49.

39 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 287–88; Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:35. Kålund most likely bases his claim on an event described in 1518 in Jón Egilsson's *Biskupa-annálar*, the veracity of which is questionable (see below).

must have realised its potential at a very early stage, and it is therefore the first harbour that we know to have been used by the Germans, namely by Hamburg merchants in 1423.[40]

Básendar was not surprisingly the site of frequent clashes between English and German traders. In 1477 merchants from Hull complained about interference by the Germans;[41] in 1491 the English complained during negotiations in Antwerp that two ships from Hull had been attacked in Straumur by 220 men from two Hamburg ships lying in Básendar and Hafnarfjörður;[42] in 1497 a skipper from Hamburg allegedly denied an English ship access to Básendar;[43] in 1509 skipper Cordt Froudendal from Hamburg encountered interference from the English;[44] and Jón Egilsson recorded in the *Biskupa-annálar* that in 1518, Germans from Vatnsleysa, Keflavík, Básendar, and Þórshöfn had killed 40 Englishmen in Hafnarfjörður. Whether or not the latter event took place is doubtful, however, because there is no mention of it in contemporary English or German sources; the annals were written in the early seventeenth century.[45] The violence of 1532 between the Germans and English erupted in Básendar as well, when Hamburg skipper Lutke Schmidt denied access to the harbour to the English ship *Anna of Harwich*. The arrival of another English ship a few days later caused tensions to spike, resulting in a battle in which two Englishmen were killed. Two months later, the conflict would spread to Grindavík.

The events of 1532 marked the end of the English presence in Básendar, and we hear little about the harbour in the years afterwards. The trading station seems to have been steadily frequented by Hamburg ships, sometimes as many as two per year. It could be that this was typical, with one ship mooring in Básendar and the other in Þórshöfn. In 1506 Hans Tappe from Hamburg stated that he could not trade in Básendar in some years before because another Hamburg ship was already there, suggesting that there was room only for one ship in the harbour of Básendar itself.[46]

40 *HR* III, 7, no. 455, §14, 15; *DI* 9:77 (15210919BRU00): English complaint from 1521 about interference in their activities in Básendar in 1423. The veracity of the source is questionable, however. See Section 3.4.1.

41 Ibid.

42 *DI* 11:43; *HR* II, 2, no. 511 §25 (14910610ANT00).

43 *DI* 11:46; *HR* II, 4, no. 14 §14, 15 (14970626ANT00).

44 *DI* 16:245 (15090814HAM00).

45 Karlsson, *Lífsbjörg Íslendinga*, 302, after Þorsteinsson, *Enska öldin*, 247. See also *DI* 16, p. 509; Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 189–191, who mentions that the annals were "of course a bit exaggerated in certain points", but believes that they are generally useful.

46 *DI* 16:257; SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 1a (15060100HAM00), in *DI* wrongly dated as 1516.

Hamburg merchants continued to assert their right to the sole use of Básendar even after Iceland was leased to Copenhagen: in 1548 they refused to allow a Danish ship to enter the harbour.[47] Hamburg merchants lost de facto control of Básendar for roughly two decades beginning in 1565, when Andres Godske and Knut Pedersen from Copenhagen received a licence for the harbour, followed by Copenhagen burgomaster Marcus Hess in June 1566; the latter complained about Hamburg interference in Básendar in 1570.[48] It is unclear how long Hess was active there; in 1572 he received licences for harbours in the north, although this does not necessarily mean that he ceased trading in Básendar.

From 1583 onwards, Hamburg merchants were continuously active in Básendar again until the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly. In March 1584, three men from Wilster in Holstein, downstream from Hamburg on the Elbe, were issued a licence for Básendar and Þórshöfn, but they do not seem to have used it. A ship from Hamburg is registered each year from 1583 onwards with Jurgen Grove, Jurgen Schinckel, and Reimer Ratkens on board. These three men also held licences for the harbour from 1586 onwards.

The last evidence we have of a German presence in Básendar provides valuable details about the workings of the trade in Iceland. In 1602, when Ratkens' licence had expired, Danish merchants from Copenhagen concentrated their activity in Keflavík and Grindavík. A ship from Helsingør, with on board Hamburg merchant Johan Holtgreve, a crew largely consisting of Dutchmen, and helmsman Marten Horneman from Hamburg, tried to reach Skagaströnd in northern Iceland, but was unable to because of the great amount of sea ice. They therefore went to Básendar, which was not in use at the time. However, the Copenhagen merchants, claiming that Básendar belonged to Keflavík and Grindavík, protested. King Christian IV later ordered the Hamburg city council to confiscate the goods from the returned ship, upon which a document was produced in which the merchants and crew members told their side of the story. According to them, they had been welcomed by the inhabitants of the district of Básendar, who had trouble selling their fish because the catch had been bad the previous year and the fish were so small that the Danish merchants did not want to buy them. Moreover, most of their horses had died during the winter, so they could not transport the fish to Keflavík or Grindavík, and the Danes would not come to them.[49] It is the case that at first Danish merchants were not eager to trade in

47 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 33.

48 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15710324FRE00).

49 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): documents from August/September 1602 (16020800KOB00, 16020806KOB00, 16020912HAM00, 16020830HAM00). See also Sections 3.5.6 and 4.1.2.

Básendar, and did not sail there until they moved their business from Grindavík in 1640.[50]

6.2.4 Keflavík

Names in the sources: Kebelvig; Keblewig; Kibbelwick; Kibleweich; Kieblewigk; Kippelwick; Kiæbleviig

Like the other harbours on the tip of the Reykjanes peninsula, Keflavík was predominantly a fishing settlement, and its district was relatively small with few farms, covering roughly the coast of the bay of Stakksfjörður. In the list of harbours offered to Hamburg merchants in 1565, Keflavík is characterised as a mid-sized harbour, requiring 20 lasts of flour each year, a third of the amount for Hafnarfjörður (Table 5.2). According to Kålund in 1877, the Hanseatic merchants had their booths on a small island facing the cliff Hólmsberg, just north of the current town of Keflavík, the ruins of which were allegedly still visible at the time.[51]

We hear little about Keflavík in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. None of the episodes of conflict between the English and Germans that characterise this period in the other harbours on the peninsula are known from Keflavík. In 1518 the harbour is mentioned as a site for German merchants in the *Biskupa-annálar*, but as noted above this entry is questionable.[52] Trading in the harbour was almost without exception undertaken by merchants from Hamburg, of whom the first certain mention in the donation register is in 1545. It could be that the harbour was not used before the 1540s, but this is unlikely, given the great significance of the other harbours in Reykjanes.

The only times we hear of merchants from other cities, i.e. of Bremen, are during periods when Hamburg merchants were not allowed to sail to Iceland. In 1565, Herman Schomaker and Herman Krechting from Bremen requested a licence for it, together with Grindavík. They indicated that Bremen merchants had sailed to the area before 1547, but it is unclear which harbour they meant by this.[53] In the case of Keflavík, their request was turned down, as a licence was granted to Joachim Thim from Hamburg in June 1566.

In 1580 we find the first mention of Hans van Hutlen on a ship to Keflavík. He would acquire a licence for the harbour in 1586, and renew it every three to

50 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 287–288.
51 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:32; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 289–290.
52 See Section 6.2.3 (Básendar).
53 See Section 6.2.2 (Grindavík).

four years until the introduction of the Danish monopoly. The first year in which Danish merchants were active in Keflavík was 1602. Where the history of trading in Keflavík had been relatively peaceful, the end was quite turbulent, as the German merchants hurriedly tried to finish their business in Iceland while their licences were still valid. In 1602 the merchants in Hafnarfjörður rented a space of 50 lasts on a ship in Keflavík for the sum of 750 mark. This space was probably intended for goods to be transported from the harbours in Straumur and Vatnsleysa, which was shared between the merchants in Keflavík (one-third) and Hafnarfjörður (two-thirds). Danish merchants complained that the German presence in Keflavík was illegal and requested Hamburg's city council to confiscate the goods of the ship when it returned in autumn, but Hans van Hutlen and his companions responded that they were sailing on the licence for Vatnsleysa and Straumur, which was valid for two more years.[54] Meanwhile, the Hafnarfjörður merchants refused to pay the freight money, as they claimed that the Keflavík merchants, after they had loaded their own goods in Keflavík, had arrived in Hafnarfjörður but had stayed very far out at sea and for no longer than about 30 hours, and furthermore had used a portion of the reserved space, so that the Hafnarfjörður merchants could not transport all of their cargo.[55]

6.2.5 Vatnsleysa / Straumur

Names in the sources:

Vatnsleysa: Wadtloß, Wattloes; Wattlose

Straumur: le Streyme, Stroem, Ströme

Vatnsleysa and Straumur are two small bays between Keflavík and Hafnarfjörður (Figure 6.2) that were used irregularly by German traders, as they are located too close to the latter to be of particular interest. In 1588, Vatnsleysa was characterised in a document from Bremen as "not a separate harbour, but only a minor place on a beach".[56] Only Straumur, close to Hafnarfjörður, seems to have been a harbour of some importance during the English period. In many of

54 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): complaint from Copenhagen merchants, August 1602 (16020800KOB00, 16020806KOB00); answer from Hamburg, September 1602 (16020913HAM00, 16020916HAM00).

55 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: documents about the case, which was dealt with by the city council, 1602–1604 (16021021HAM00, 16021126HAM00, 16030400HAM00, 16030429HAM00, 16030505HAM00, 16040111HAM00, 16040123HAM00).

56 "Wattloße inndt sudenn, so im gleichenn keine sonderbare having, dann einn geringer ordt eins sehstrandes seinn soll". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Heinrich Bredelo (15880118BRE00).

the documents about the clashes between English and German merchants in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, English ships are mentioned as having been in Straumur. One of the reasons they used this harbour was to trade in sulphur from the nearby mines in Krýsuvík.[57]

Concerning the later history of both harbours, the above-mentioned document produced in the course of the complaints about Hamburg merchants in Keflavík submitted by Copenhagen merchants in 1602 provides a good deal of information. The Hamburg merchants set forth an overview of those who had sailed to the two harbours from 1573 onwards until the start of their licence in 1596 to counter the Copenhagen merchants' claims that no German had used them before:[58]

1577: merchants from Hamburg and Buxtehude in Straumur
1578: a merchant from Buxtehude in Vatnsleysa
1580: Folckert Frese from Hamburg in Straumur
1582: Jurgen Reinstorp from Hamburg in Vatnsleysa
1583–84: a merchant from Bremen in Vatnsleysa
1585: Hinrick Schutte from Hamburg and the ship of Duke Adolf of Holstein-Gottorp in Straumur
1589: a merchant from Hamburg in Straumur and one from Bremen in Vatnsleysa
1591: Matthias Vlenhop from Hamburg in Straumur; a merchant from Bremen in Vatnsleysa

The merchant from Bremen in both 1589 and 1591 was Johan Schroder, who applied for a licence of the harbour in September 1589, under the pretence that he had sailed there for a couple of years before.[59] The licence was granted for three years. If we assume that the list above is complete, he might have used it irregularly, but it is likely that he sailed there much more often, and probably until 1595.

57 Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 196. Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 107, identifies "Strome" as Straumfjörður, near Borgarfjörður south of Snæfellsnes (Figure 6.2). This is unlikely, given the frequent mention of "Strome" in combination with "Wattlose" (Vatnsleysa), which suggests that the harbours were in close proximity to each other. However, in the seventeenth century the inhabitants of Borgarfjörður regularly asked that a ship sail to Straumfjörður, as had been the case when Hamburg merchants traded in the area (Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 294). This suggests that Hamburg merchants were indeed sailing there in the sixteenth century, although there is no contemporary evidence to support this.

58 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16020913HAM01).

59 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15890000BRE00); Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9) (15890915EUT00); SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15890906BRE00, 15890906BRE01).

Indeed, the request for the combined licence for Vatnsleysa and Straumur, which the Hamburg merchants were granted in February 1596, seems to have been an attempt to eliminate competition from Bremen from their districts. The licence was given to Rotman Pöner, Cordt Wemeyer, Jacob Hambrock, and Herman Kopman. The latter three were merchants in Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík, and the first was the son of Fritz Pöner, the Danish toll collector in Rendsburg. The four men did not fit out a ship themselves, but rented space on the ship of the merchants in Keflavík.[60] As we saw above, this was a collaboration between merchants from Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík. In a letter from Danish merchant Niels Busk to Fritz Pöner in January 1596, the former warned the latter that his son should be quick to apply for a licence, as Bremen merchants were also applying for one. In passing he mentioned that he had also applied for a licence for Straumur himself.[61] This suggests that the project in both harbours was an attempt by Hamburg merchants, in cooperation with Danish partners, to cut out the Bremen competition in their district. Successfully at first, the project ended in conflict, which has been sketched above.[62]

6.2.6 Hafnarfjörður

Names in the sources: Haffnefiordt; Hahnenfurdt; Hamsfurth; Hanefiordt; Hanenforde; Hanefur; Hanefürth; Haneviore; Hanevoort; Hauesford

If there is one place frequented by German merchants in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that had the potential to become a permanent German settlement or *Kontor* in Iceland, it would have been Hafnarfjörður, at least in the 1530s. The harbour exceeded all other harbours in Iceland in terms of trade volume, number of merchants, and political importance. Hamburg merchants usually sailed here with two ships a year, with more merchants travelling than on any other route. 50 to 60 persons per ship were not unusual, whereas the ships to Keflavík, usually only one per year, had about 40 on board each year, the other harbours even fewer.[63] The list of harbours offered to Hamburg in 1565 lists Hafnarfjörður as requiring 60 lasts of flour each year, double the amount of Básendar, the second harbour on the list (Table 5.2). As described in more detail

60 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: statement of the licence holders, 13 September 1602 (16020913HAM00).

61 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9): Aarhus, 14 January 1596 (15960114AAR00).

62 See Section 6.2.4 (Keflavík).

63 See Section 7.4.4 and Figure 7.3.

above, Hamburg merchants built a church here in the 1530s, which seems to have functioned as the social centre of the Hamburg merchants in Iceland, or at least in the Southwest.[64]

In terms of commodities, Hafnarfjörður was an important harbour for stockfish as well as for other products, and it is characterised as both a fish and slaughter harbour during the Danish trade monopoly. It seems that many farmers from southern Iceland brought their produce here instead of to Eyrarbakki.[65] During the period of German dominance, the trading region for fish seems to have spanned a large stretch of coast, roughly the southern part of Faxaflói bay, with the exception of the region near Keflavík. As Skúlason notes, the licence for Hafnarfjörður for Joachim Wichman in 1566 explicitly prohibited the sulphur trade, whereas the licence for Keflavík for Joachim Thim in the same year did not, indicating that sulphur might have been traded in Hafnarfjörður as well.[66] This is not unlikely, given the proximity to the Krýsuvík area, and the fact that nearby Straumur had been used as a harbour for sulphur export by the English before (Figure 6.2).

A leading factor contributing to Hafnarfjörður's prominence was that it was one of the few secure harbours in southwestern Iceland. The trading site was located in a bay on the northern coast of the Reykjanes peninsula, specifically on an islet called Háigrandi, which was connected to the shore by a natural stone causeway, Hvaleyrargrandi. This provided a natural sheltered harbour that could be defended easily and ships could be loaded quickly (Figure 6.3).[67]

Curiously, there are hardly any references to the harbour before 1400. It is first mentioned in the Icelandic annals when Norwegian merchants visited the harbour in 1391. During the fifteenth century, it became a major harbour for the English, but it also attracted Dutch and German merchants. In 1413, Icelandic annals mention an English merchant named Richard, who first landed in Eyrarbakki, went on to Skálholt, and afterwards sailed to Hafnarfjörður to trade, probably because Eyrarbakki was a notoriously difficult harbour. The first mention of a German ship is from 1471, when a ship from Holland, having arrived in Hafnarfjörður and discovered that the English had captured a German ship, subsequently drove away the English and freed the Germans.[68] The first certain evidence for Hamburg merchants in Hafnarfjörður is in 1486,

64 See Sections 5.4.3 and 7.1.1.2.

65 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 291–292.

66 *DI* 14:329 (15660303FRE00); Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 216.

67 Guðmundsson, *Saga Hafnarfjarðar*, vol. 1, 12–14.

68 *HR* II, 7, no. 39, §30. See Section 3.3.

Figure 6.3: Map of the modern harbour of Hafnarfjörður with an overlay of the historical coastline (red). The trading site was located on Háigrandi. Map courtesy of Gudmund O. Ingvarsson.

when Lutke Sten arrived here in his cog.[69] Around this time, Hamburg merchants must have out-competed the English, who apparently moved their business elsewhere.[70] It is significant that the clashes between the English and Germans in Iceland (except for the 1471 case sketched above) frequently involved merchants *from* Hafnarfjörður, but almost never took place *in* Hafnarfjörður, with nearby Básendar and Grindavík being the sites of conflict.

Another decisive factor for the importance of Hafnarfjörður was its nearness to some of the centres of political power on Iceland: the royal farm at Bessastaðir, residence of the Danish governors and bailiffs of Iceland in the sixteenth century, was located on a headland just north of the harbour; and Þingvellir, the place of the annual assembly at the Althing, was located about 40 km inland. The diocese of Skálholt was a bit closer to the harbour of Eyrarbakki, but Hafnarfjörður had the advantage of being a considerably better harbour, as the account of the English merchant from 1413 shows.

The close relations of the merchants in Hafnarfjörður with the officials in these places are indicated by many sources. Merchants from Hafnarfjörður showed up at

69 *DI* 16:294 (15320000HAM00). According to the Hamburg pound toll register, the ship was owned by Eler van Stendelen and left Hamburg between 30 April and 13 May: Hormuth, Jahnke, and Loebert, eds., *Pfundgeldlisten*, 182. A return journey is not attested in the same year.
70 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 180–93; Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 179–180.

the Althing on various occasions, and a copy of the 1527 verdict of Althing, which was signed by the governor as well, was drafted in Hafnarfjörður.[71] Merchants from Hafnarfjörður allied with bailiff Didrick von Minden (whose brother was one of the Hamburg merchants) in the battles with the English in 1532. And when the governor Lorentz Mule tried to limit the influence of German merchants in Iceland in the years 1548–1550, many of the negotiations and conflicts took place in Hafnarfjörður.[72] Lawmen, governors, and bailiffs are also frequently mentioned in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne on ships from Hafnarfjörður. It is therefore not hard to understand why Skúlason characterises Hafnarfjörður as "a kind of capital [. . .] for all of Iceland" for the German merchants.[73]

Hafnarfjörður always seems to have been an exclusive domain for Hamburgers, whereas Bremen and Lübeck traders were active in nearby Hólmur. Hamburg merchants even seem to have taken pains to prevent merchants of other cities from trading there: Lübeck merchant Herman Vurborn complained in 1539 that Hamburg merchants had prevented him from using the harbour, even though he had been given permission by King Christian III.[74] The Hamburg merchants in Hafnarfjörður seem to have been a tightly knit community, one that is not hard to identify in the Hamburg donation registers each year. Where ships to other harbours often had different skippers each year, the same skippers sailed to Hafnarfjörður year after year, sometimes for decades. Some examples are Jurgen vam Hagen (attested in the years 1536–1553), Peter Korner (1536–1551), Herman Struckmeyer (1555–1572), Joachim Valeman (1559–1589), Herman van Schuren (1573–1583), and Hans Holtgreve (1587–1600). Moreover, the licences for Hafnarfjörður (always two at the same time from 1586 onwards) were mostly issued in the name of the skipper instead of the merchant leading the trading, as was usual in most of the other harbours.[75]

The pattern in the donation registers sketched above does not change much during the difficult years for Hamburg in the mid-1560s. Although the total number of ships to Iceland decreased sharply (Figure 3.4), ships to Hafnarfjörður are recorded every year. The only exception are the years 1576–1578, when Copenhagen burgomaster Marcus Hess held the licence for Hafnarfjörður, although one ship is recorded as sailing to Hafnarfjörður in 1577. This may have been requested by the Icelanders, who had complained at the Althing about the poor quality of the

71 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 202–205.
72 Skúlason, 213–15.
73 Skúlason, 213–14.
74 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4 (15390000LUB00), vol. 2 (15390206LUB00); *DI* 10:112; Skúlason, 200.
75 See Section 7.2.3.

commodities and about unfair trading practices in Hafnarfjörður in 1576.[76] After 1578, licences for all Reykjanes harbours were issued to governor Johan Bockholt,[77] who must have worked closely with the Germans, as business seems to have continued as usual in Hafnarfjörður, as well as in the other harbours. Moreover, Bockholt is sometimes mentioned spending to St Anne's confraternity.

Hafnarfjörður was one of the few harbours for which licences were still valid for two years after the Danish trade monopoly was introduced in 1601. The last years, however, were not easy for the German traders there. The Copenhagen merchants, who had started to trade in Keflavík and Grindavík in 1602, made life difficult for the Germans, and compounding the problems of the latter was the dispute with the Keflavík merchants about the transport of commodities from Vatnsleysa and Straumur, as sketched above. Moreover, they were pressed by the merchants in Hvalfjörður, who had lost their ship in the Elbe in 1601, to help them transport their commodities, which they refused to do.[78] On top of that, the merchants were not allowed to enter into any new trading relationships. Unfortunately, the debt system made it almost impossible to trade without bringing in new customers via credit.[79] The merchants in Hafnarfjörður must therefore have experienced considerable losses in these last years.

6.2.7 Hólmur (Reykjavík)

Names in the sources: Holmen; Bremer Holm

About 10 km north of Hafnarfjörður, the northern shore of the headland Seltjarnarnes near the farm Reykjavík housed the harbour known as Holm (Hólmur). It was named after a small tidal island, Grandahólmi, which could be reached at low tide over a natural stone causeway, not unlike Hafnarfjörður. Halfway between Grandahólmi and Seltjarnarnes, a second branch of the causeway led to the islet Örfirisey, which is nowadays in Reykjavík harbour. As we can see on a map from 1715, the Danish trading station was located on Örfirisey, with Grandahólmi only indicated as a group of insignificant skerries (Figure 6.4). Kålund mentions that there is a lot of evidence for the trading station originally being located on Grandahólmi and for ships anchoring in the bay Eiðisvík west of the causeway. The trading station was later moved to Örfirisey because of the

76 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 222.

77 *KB* 1576–1579, 651.

78 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: 28 February 1603 (16030228HAM00); RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): 4 April 1603 (16030304HAM00).

79 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 223–224. See Section 4.2.2.

Figure 6.4: Map from 1749 of the Danish trading station in Hólmur, made by captain Hans Hoffgaard. The South is at the top. The trading station is indicated with a Danish flag on the island Örfirisey ("Effersøe"). Between Örfirisey, Akurey ("Akkerøe"), and the mainland Seltjarnarnes ("Saltenæs"), skerries are visible that represent the islet Grandahólmi, after which the trading station had been named earlier. (Copenhagen, Royal Library).

danger of storms and frequent flooding on Grandahólmi, with ships anchoring east of the island near Reykjavík, probably around 1700. None of this evidence, however, is contemporary.[80] Travelling to both islets over the causeway was not without danger, and there were frequent mentions of accidents happening there. Around 1780, the trading buildings were moved to the mainland, and the harbour came to be known as Reykjavík after the farm.[81]

Hólmur was also frequently called "Bremer Holm", especially in the late sixteenth century.[82] This is curious, because most of the documents about Hólmur

80 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:5–7; 2:399–401.
81 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 292.
82 E.g. in the donation register SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 391v (1595), 414r (1598).

in this period refer to merchants from Lübeck, notably Hans Delmenhorst, who was issued a licence for ten years in 1586, and Luder Ottersen. The identification with Bremen therefore relates to an earlier period. It is not unlikely that merchants from Bremen were the first to have used the harbour. The first reference to this is during the clashes with the English in 1532, when merchants from Básendar and Hafnarfjörður, "as well as the Bremen men (and) from Hólmur" helped the bailiff to defeat the English in Grindavík.[83] In December 1548, six Bremen merchants complained to the city council that they visited the harbour every year, but that Herman Oldensche and some others, who had joined them for a couple of years, had invited a man from Lübeck (who would normally not sail there) to sail with them to Hólmur, and had violently driven their former associates out of the harbour.[84] This was probably the end of Bremen presence in Hólmur. In the accounts of Eggert Hannesson from 1552, Lübeck skipper Henrick Kron is mentioned in Hólmur.[85] In 1589, the widow of Lübeck merchant Hans Delmenhorst claimed that her former husband had sailed to Hólmur for about 35 years.[86] If this is correct, he must have sailed for the first time in the mid-1550s. Therefore, around this time at the latest Bremen merchants must have lost the use of the harbour to Lübeck merchants. It might even have been the case that Herman Oldensche was a Lübeck citizen himself or had moved to that city. Roughly 20 years later, a Herman Oldenseel from Lübeck, who might have been the same person, acquired a licence for Vopnafjörður.[87]

The harbour Hólmur was a desirable trading site, and after Hans Delmenhorst died when his ship wrecked in the Elbe in 1589, both Peter Sivers from Hamburg[88] and Carsten Bake from Bremen applied for a licence for the harbour. Although the licence for Delmenhorst was still valid until 1596, and his widow Anna requested to continue using the harbour,[89] a new licence for three years was issued to Carsten Bake, possibly because Peter Sivers had already been granted a licence for Skagaströnd, for which he had also applied. However, this did not mean that the harbour was back in the hands of Bremen merchants. In the second year of his licence, Carsten Bake formed a *maschup* with Luder Ottersen from Lübeck, who

83 "ock dem Bremeren unde uth dem Holme wolden bystant dhon", as the Hamburg skipper Hinrick Berndes, who had been in Básendar himself, testified in 1533. *DI* 16:322 (15330210HAM01). The addition "unde" is puzzling here, leaving room for the possibility that the Bremen merchants were not trading in Hólmur but elsewhere.

84 SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15481209BRE00).

85 *DI* 12:323; Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 17. See Table 5.1.

86 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22) (15891028LUB00).

87 See Sections 6.6.1 and 7.2.6.

88 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): 26 August 1589 (15890826HAM00, 15890826HAM01).

89 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22): October 1589 (15891028LUB00, 15891030LUB00).

had become Danish factor in Lübeck. According to Bake, he (Bake) had been forced to do so by governor Lorentz Kruse.[90] Upon the latter's request, and after Ottersen had complained that Bake had sailed to England and stayed there for a year and had not behaved cooperatively, Bake left the harbour to Ottersen,[91] who was granted the licence in his own name for three years in November 1592. In March 1599, a new licence for three years was issued for Ottersen and Jasper van Doren. The holder of the licence for the intervening three years is not known, but it is likely to have been Ottersen.

Although the trade in Hólmur was nominally always in the hands of Bremen or Lübeck merchants, Hamburg merchants did have a strong influence here, especially in the later sixteenth century. The ship of Hans Delmenhorst is attested in the donation register of St Anne's confraternity on multiple occasions, first in 1570 and every year from 1581 onwards. Delmenhorst probably sailed to Iceland from Hamburg and returned there (which is also suggested by his shipwreck in the Elbe), and might have partnered with the Hamburg merchants.[92] The same goes for Luder Ottersen's ship, which is attested in the register in 1591, indicating that Ottersen sent his own ship when Carsten Bake stayed in England that year. Jasper van Doren was also a Hamburg merchant, previously active in Hafnarfjörður, and mentioned as being on board the ships to Hólmur from 1592 onwards. Hólmur appears in the register regularly even after the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly, indicating that Hamburg skippers continued to sail there, probably having been contracted to do so by Danish merchants.

6.2.8 Hvalfjörður / Akranes

Names in the sources:

Hvalfjörður: Hvalfiordt; Wahlforede; Walforde haven; Wallefiord

Akranes: Ackernesse; Ackernisse; Arckermisse; Ackrannes

The fjord Hvalfjörður, north of Hafnarfjörður and Reykjavík (Figure 6.2), seemed to have belonged to the trading district of the latter harbours, as was the case during

90 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): complaint of Carsten Bake, 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE01); Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): winter 1592/3 (15921231BRE00).

91 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): 1 October 1592 (15921001VIS00); Ottersen's request for a licence, 1593 (15930000XXX00).

92 The request of Peter Sivers for the harbour in 1596 (RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) 15890826HAM00) even states that Hans Delmenhorst was from Hamburg, which was probably a rhetorical trick to heighten the chances of receiving the licence.

the Danish monopoly.[93] Although Hvalfjörður was a major harbour for Norwegian merchants, who are first mentioned in the annals as being here in 1341, it lost importance after 1400 when Hafnarfjörður became established as the region's main trading site.[94] This did not change during the German period, so that the inhabitants must have travelled south to Hafnarfjörður or Reykjavík to sell their produce. Only in the late 1540s, when Iceland was enfeoffed to Copenhagen, do we find mentions of Hamburg merchants in Akranes, on the headland at the entrance of the fjord. Heinrich Kopman is recorded as having sailed to Akranes in 1548 in the donation register of St Anne's confraternity and was probably active there until 1551. A complaint written around 1549 mentions that fish were confiscated from Kopman by governor Lorentz Mule.[95] This indicates that the use of Akranes may have been an attempt of Hamburg merchants to circumvent the limitations that were imposed by the Copenhagen-appointed governor on the German trade by moving their business from Hafnarfjörður to an unused harbour. It does not seem to have been used much in subsequent years, although Akranes was also mentioned in the list of harbours offered to Hamburg in 1565. Here it was the smallest harbour, requiring only ten lasts of flour annually (Table 5.2).

In November 1600, Hamburg merchants acquired a licence for Hvalfjörður ("Walforde") upon request of the inhabitants, who had found that Hafnarfjörður was too far away.[96] However, the enterprise met with no success. The first ship that sailed to Hvalfjörður in 1601 wrecked on the return journey, on which occasion the licence was lost as well.[97] The Danish king, who had announced the Danish monopoly in the meantime, was not willing to issue a new licence, and the merchants in Hafnarfjörður were not eager to help their colleagues as well,[98] so German commercial activity in Hvalfjörður probably remained restricted to this one year.

Fieldwork at the archaeological site of Búðasandur or Maríuhöfn in the middle of the fjord on its southern shore, which was the trading site used by the Norwegians in the fourteenth century, did not reveal any building activity after *c.* 1490,[99] so either the German merchants in Hvalfjörður in the late sixteenth century used another trading site such as Akranes, which would mean that both names were used synonymously by the Germans, or they set up tents and did not

93 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 293.

94 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 177–178.

95 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2 (15490000HAM00); Baasch, Islandfahrt, 106n2.

96 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8): list of licences, 1601–1603 (16010000XXX00).

97 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): request for a copy of the licence (16021127HAM00).

98 SAH 111–1, vol. 4: complaints from the merchants, 28 February 1603 (16030228HAM00); April 1603 (16030400HAM01).

99 Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 413–414.

erect (semi-)permanent structures (which is not unlikely, given their short presence there). The latter possibility gains support from an overview of licences in which "Wallefiord" is mentioned as being located in "Kioß süßel" (Kjósarsýsla).[100] This refers to the southern shore of the fjord only, whereas the northern shore, including Akranes, was part of Borgarfjarðarsýsla.

6.3 Western Iceland: Snæfellsnes

6.3.1 Búðir

Names in the sources: Badenstett; Berenstet; Bodenstede; Budenstede; Buderstadt
Located on the southern coast of the Snæfellsnes peninsula around the mouth of the River Búðaós, Búðir was a trading site that in Danish times was associated with a large region mostly to the east. The reason that Búðir, which was also known as a slaughter harbour in Danish times because of the many farmers in its district, was located at the edge of the district, was possibly because the Germans who first started sailing here were mainly interested in fish, which were abundant around the tip of the peninsula (Figure 6.5). A fishing settlement was located on the western shore of the river, the ruins of which are still visible, whereas the

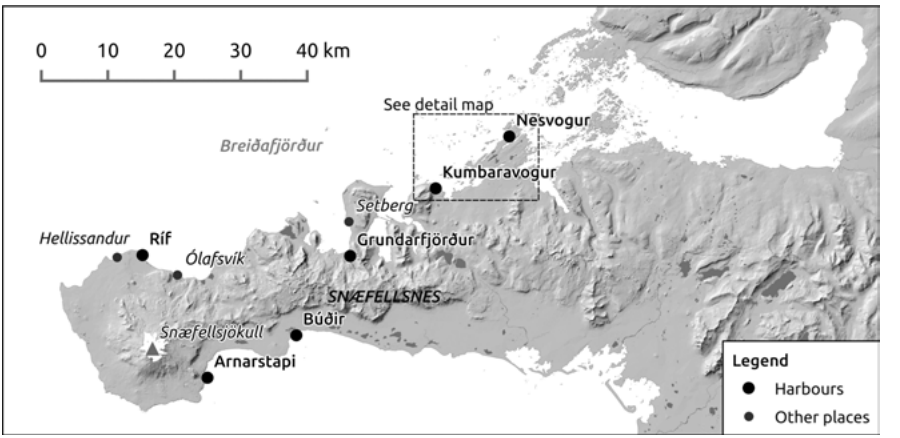

Figure 6.5: Map of trading stations and other locations in Snæfellsnes. See Figure 6.11 for the detail map of the area around Nesvogur and Kumbaravogur, see Figure 6.1 for location.

100 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8): overview of licensed harbours, 1601 (16010000XXX00).

Figure 6.6: Búðir as seen from the west, with the River Búðaós in the foreground. The photograph is taken on the site of the fishing station, whereas the trading site was located on the beach on the opposite riverbank. Photograph by the author.

trading booths (after which the site is named) were located on the beach east of the mouth of the stream until the end of the eighteenth century (Figure 6.6).[101] The harbour of Búðir, located at the mouth of the river, could only be entered at high tide and was quite dangerous. There are frequent mentions of wrecks here in German and Danish times, including that of the ship of Bremen merchant Vasmer Bake in the 1580s.[102]

For most of the sixteenth century, Búðir was frequented by merchants from Bremen. According to a document from 1588, it was first visited by Wilcken Hudeman in 1526, and was used continuously from then onwards.[103] This is corroborated by a document from 1564, where it is stated that Bremen merchants had been visiting the harbour for about 40 years.[104] The latter document was a complaint about the attempts of Hamburg skipper Jurgen Borchers to trade in Búðir that year, which was probably caused by Hamburg ships being prohibited from sailing to the nearby harbours Ríf, Arnarstapi, and Grundarfjörður in 1563.[105] Just a few years later the Bremen merchants found themselves barred from visiting

101 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:411–412.

102 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): letter of 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE01). Carsten Bake mentioned in 1593 that his father Vasmer had 'recently' ("vor kurtzen") lost his ship in the harbour of Búðir, and another ship had been taken by English pirates. The latter incident took place in 1587, so it is likely that the shipwreck dates to the 1580s as well.

103 SAB 2-R.11.ff. Instruction for Heinrich Bredelo, 18 January 1588 (15880118BRE00).

104 SAB 2-R.11.ff., RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 28 August 1564 (15640828BRE00).

105 *DI* 14:207, 209–11, 231; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 20 December 1564 (15641220HAM00). The same thing happened in Kumbaravogur (see Section 6.3.5).

Búðir as well by the Danish king, when a licence was granted to Danish counsellor Birge Trolle in February 1566.[106] The Bremen envoy Tyleman Zerneman was sent to Denmark the next year to discuss, among various matters, the problems in Búðir and Kumbaravogur,[107] and apparently was received favourably, as in October 1567, Bremen merchant Johan Hudeman (Wilcken's son?) received a licence for Búðir with no set term. Zerneman's instruction also indicates that Arnarstapi was considered as belonging to Búðir, but the licence does not mention this explicitly, which caused conflict some years later (see below). In Búðir, however, Hudeman remained active until the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly.

6.3.2 Arnarstapi

Names in the sources: Arenestappen; Stapfe; Stappe; Stoppen

Arnarstapi is located a few kilometres west of Búðir, just south of the volcano Snæfellsjökull (figure 6.5). The coast is rugged and is marked by cliffs: there is no natural harbour and ships had to anchor off the coast, unprotected from the weather. Despite this difficulty, Arnarstapi was sought after as a trading site because of the excellent fishing grounds around Snæfellsnes, especially in spring and winter. The trading site belonged to the royal farm of Arnarstapi, which was a seat of regional power at different points in time.[108]

A number of sources indicate that Arnarstapi was used for a long time, but its early history is hard to reconstruct due to the absence of clear statements in these sources. In 1591 Detmar Kenckel, Bremen factor for the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, requested a licence for Arnarstapi, making the argument that his father, also called Detmar, had used the harbour for a long time before merchants from Hamburg took over.[109] The elder Detmar Kenckel (1513–1584) had been burgomaster of Bremen, although it is unclear at which time he traded in Arnarstapi. Eggert Hannesson's 1552 accounts mention a Hamburg merchant in Arnarstapi, which provides us a *terminus ante quem*.[110] Kenckel had started his commercial

106 *DI* 14:327 (15660228KOB00).

107 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Tyleman Zerneman, 26 September 1567 (15670926BRE00).

108 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 296; Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:415–416.

109 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 7 September 1591 (15910907BRE00).

110 *DI* 12:323 (see Table 5.1). In a letter to his wife from 1567, Detmar Kenckel wrote that he still had outstanding debts for the sale of Icelandic stockfish in Verden. Heinrich Smidt, "Aus Detmar Kenckel's Nachlass (Bremische Familienpapiere aus dem 16. Jahrhundert)", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 7 (1874): 30.

activities when he took over the business of his father, the burgomaster of Verden Dietrich Kenckel, upon the latter's death in 1531.[111] It is unknown whether Detmar was already trading in Iceland at that time, but not impossible. In 1502, two German merchants in Iceland with the names Kinkel and Wilde are mentioned.[112] The former may have been Dietrich Kenckel, and although the source does not mention a specific harbour, it is not impossible that he traded in Arnarstapi.

The Hamburg merchants took over trading in Arnarstapi in the 1540s. It is mentioned the first time in the donation register in 1561, but ships for previous years can be connected with reasonable certainty to the harbour from 1542 onwards. In 1563, however, King Frederick II banned the use of Arnarstapi, Ríf, and Grundarfjörður to Hamburg merchants and granted the rights to these harbours to Danish citizens. The next year Bremen merchants complained about the interference of Jurgen Borchers from Hamburg in nearby Búðir.[113] It is quite certain that these were the same Hamburg merchants who were trading in Arnarstapi before: in the donation register we find the merchants Asmus Stall and Hans Hase on the ship of Jurgen Borchers in 1563 and 1564. These merchants are also mentioned on the ships to Arnarstapi in 1561 and 1562.

In March 1565, a licence for Arnarstapi and Ríf was granted to Copenhagen merchant Andres Jude, although it is unclear if and how long he was active there. Johan Hudeman from Bremen, who had a licence for Búðir, complained in 1570 that Hans Gronewold from Hamburg had been using Arnarstapi for the last three years, even though his licence was for Ríf only. Hudeman claimed that Arnarstapi was an emergency harbour (*nothaven*) belonging to Búðir (Figure 6.7).[114] It is significant that from 1568 onwards, Asmus Stall, who is attested in Arnarstapi in the early 1560s, appears together with Hans Gronewold on ships to Ríf in the Hamburg donation register. From 1573 onwards, the two are listed on separate ships, suggesting that Stall had started sailing to Arnarstapi again.

Once again the Hamburg merchants were not left in peace. In 1576 Arnarstapi and Ríf were licensed to Richard Wederbar from Helsingør for three years, and afterwards to Copenhagen burgomaster Marcus Hess (together with Grundarfjörður). Both Wederbar and Hess encountered difficulties and Hamburg merchants must have profited from this. At least the Hamburg donation register suggests that Hamburg merchants were sailing to Arnarstapi from 1578 onwards,

111 Karl H. Schwebel, "Kenckel, Detmar", *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 1977, https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd119727641.html#ndbcontent.

112 *DI* 8:76; *DN* 16:338 (15020300LUB00).

113 See Section 6.3.1 (Búðir).

114 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 23 January 1571 (15710123BRE00).

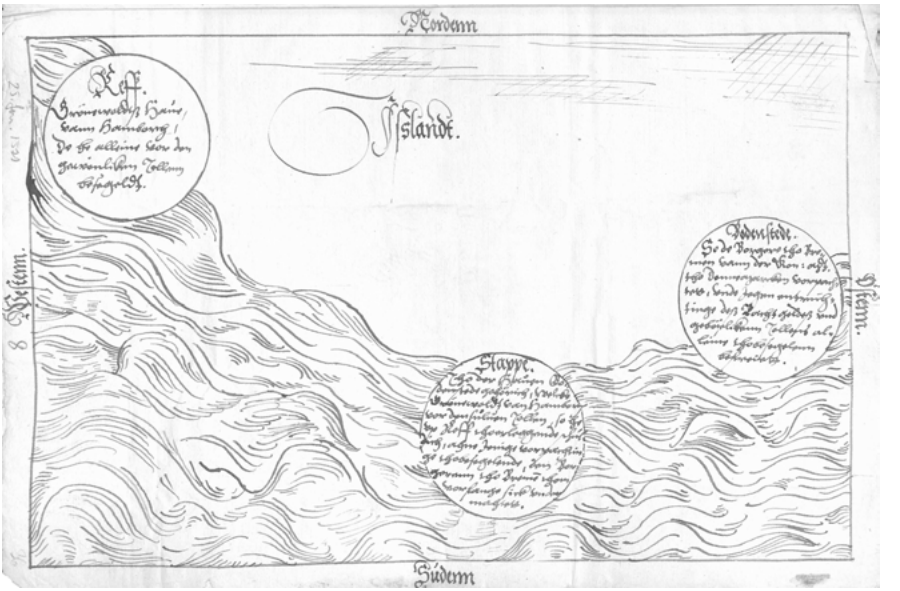

Figure 6.7: Drawing of the harbours around the tip of Snæfellsnes, accompanying Bremen complaints in 1571. *Left to right*, Ríf, Arnarstapi, and Búðir. RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15).

as the later licence holder Ambrosius Loring is attested in those years. This coincides with the capture of Richard Wederbar's ship by the English the year before.[115] Marcus Hess, moreover, got into financial trouble in 1580, so that he must have been unable to continue his Icelandic business.[116] In February 1586, Ambrosius Loring was granted a licence for Arnarstapi, which was renewed regularly until the Danish trade monopoly. Loring probably did not sail to Iceland himself after 1594, as Berndt Lininck and Jurgen Wegener are mentioned as merchants on the ships to Arnarstapi from then on.

6.3.3 Ríf

Names in the sources: Gambylweke; Gammelwick; Grannelwick; Reff; Reven; Reffuit; Reiff; Revet

115 *KB* 1576–1579: 10 April 1578.
116 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 221.

The harbour Ríf, located on the northern side of Snæfellsjökull between various fishing settlements such as Hellissandur and Gufuskálar (Figure 6.5), was one of the best for the fish trade, and therefore the English, who called it Gammelwick, were active here as early as the fifteenth century.[117] Ríf was a fairly secure harbour, but due to it silting up, the Danes moved the trading station to Ólafsvík, a bit further east, in the late seventeenth century.[118] German activity in Ólafsvík is not known; although frequent requests were made to use Ólafsvík and Hellissandur west of Ríf in the late sixteenth century, licences for those places were never granted.[119]

The English seem to have been active in Ríf / Gammelwick until the 1520s, when they were out-competed by Hamburg merchants, and moved to Grundarfjörður, east of Ríf. In 1528, Hamburg merchants complained that the ship of Hans Schomaker, which was lying in Ríf, had been attacked by seven ships from England.[120] And in 1531, Hans Huge from Hamburg went to Ríf, when an English ship came from Grundarfjörður and bought all the fish destined for him.[121] From this point on, the harbour was used by Hamburg merchants for a long time. In the Hamburg donation register, we find the ships of Hans Huge until 1545, and afterwards the merchants on his ship mostly sailed with Herman Struckmeyer. In 1549, we find Hans Gronewold on board Struckmeyer's ship for the first time; Gronewold would become the leading merchant of the Ríf trade in the middle of the century.

From 1563, the history of Ríf is closely intertwined with that of Arnarstapi, as has been sketched above. After a short period in which the harbours were licensed to Danish merchants, Hans Gronewold appears in the donation

117 *DI* 16:258 (15310523XXX00). Gamlavík is the name of a bay a bit further to the east, in which Ólafsvík is located. According to Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 299, "Gammelwick" was therefore Ólafsvík. In English complaints from 1533 (*DI* 16:315), Hamburg skipper Hans Huge is mentioned as having been in "Gambelwyke", while German sources name the harbour he used as "Reff", indicating that both names were used for Ríf. It is also possible that the harbours were not demarcated that precisely before the introduction of licences, and that both "Reff" and "Gammelwick" roughly meant the area around Ríf and Ólafsvík, which after all are located very close to each other.

118 Aðils, 298; Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:420n2.

119 Requests of Carsten Bake for Hellissandur or Nesvogur, 1592: RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15921231BRE00); Herman Beverborch for Hellissandur, 1597: Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15970115HAM00, 15970118HAM00); Bernd Salefeld the Younger for Hellissandur or Ólafsvík, 1600: Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16001113HAM00) and with his brother Henning, 1601 (16010213HAM00, 16010216HAM00); the Count of Oldenburg for Ólafsvík, 1603: NLO Best. 20, -25, no. 6 (16030200OLD01).

120 *DI* 16:294; SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 1a (15320000HAM00, 15280000HAM00), *DI* 11:96 (15280916HAM00).

121 *DI* 16:258 (15310523XXX00).

registers of St Anne's confraternity again in 1566. His licence for Ríf, about which Bremen merchants wrote in their complaints concerning his allegedly illegal presence in Arnarstapi,[122] was therefore most likely acquired in 1566. After being licensed to Danish merchants Richard Wederbar and Marcus Hess in the 1570s, Ríf was visited by Hamburg merchants again around 1580, this time with Bernd Salefeld as the main merchant. He acquired a licence in 1586, and renewed it every three to four years. That said, there was a lot of competition among Hamburg merchants for the use of the harbour. Hans Hase requested a licence as well in December 1589, under the pretext that it could be used by two ships at once. The licence was issued, and then cancelled when Salefeld objected.[123] When Salefeld died in December 1596, Joachim Terminau, who had been in service of the Danish king as translator, requested a licence, as did Herman Beverborch, who hoped to form a *maschup* with Salefeld's heirs.[124] However, it was Bernd Salefeld the Younger who continued the business of his father, though only for three years. In January 1600, Ríf was licensed to Bergen merchant Gerd Melsow. Salefeld, however, managed to acquire a licence for Flatey in Breiðafjörður, and stationed his brother David in Ríf in 1601. Because Salefeld did not manage to reach Ríf in 1602, he returned in 1603 to collect his outstanding debts. However, by that time his licence for Flatey had ended as well, and his goods were confiscated by lawman Jón Jonsson, who accused David Salefeld of having been there illegally. There is no evidence that Bernd's repeated requests to the Danish court that his goods be returned to him were were successful.[125]

6.3.4 Grundarfjörður

Names in the sources: Grindfiordt; Grindeförde; Grindtvorde; Gronderforde; Grundefiort; Grundevorde; Grunfordt; Gryndeforde

The harbours located on the northern shore of the Snæfellsnes peninsula – Grundarfjörður, Kumbaravogur, and Nesvogur – are among the best documented in the late sixteenth century, due to frequent disputes between merchants from Bremen and Oldenburg. The harbours were in demand because of the fish that

122 See Section 6.3.2 (Arnarstapi).

123 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): request (15891206HAM02); Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25): cancelled licence (15900129KOB02).

124 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): request of Joachim Terminau, 24 December (15961224HAM00); of Herman Beverborch, 15 January 1597 (15970115HAM00). See also Section 7.2.1.

125 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): 8 September 1603–10 January 1604 (16030908HAM00, 16030913HAM00, 16030923HAM00, 16031113HAM00, 16040110HAM00).

were caught in Breiðafjörður north of the peninsula (Figure 6.5), although their trading districts were small and sparsely populated. Grundarfjörður was in Danish times often combined with Kumbaravogur to the east. In 1662, the Danish trading site was moved from Kumbaravogur to Grundarfjörður (Figure 6.8).[126] The trading site was located on the beach Grundarkampur on the southeastern shore of Grundarfjörður bay, a few kilometres east of the modern town. The trading site, the ruins of which are still visible, was also used by Dutch and French traders as late as the late nineteenth century.[127]

Figure 6.8: Drawing of the Danish trading station in Grundarfjörður by the priest Sæmundur Magnússon Hólm from Helgafell (1792) with the mountain Kirkjufell in the background. Image courtesy of Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands, Reykjavík, Drawing Collection 5/5.

The first reference to a German presence in Grundarfjörður relates to a dispute between Hamburg merchants in 1506. A ship of skipper Lubberd Tideman had

126 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 300.

127 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:427. It is not known whether the Germans also traded at this site. The ruins are all connected to the period after 1662.

come to the harbour in 1504, three days after Hans Tappe, who would not allow the merchants to use the harbour and destroyed the booths while they were trying to build them. According to Tappe, however, it was custom that the first to arrive in a harbour had the exclusive right to use it, and he was therefore not obliged to allow others to trade there.[128] A Bremen complaint from 1523 tells that Bremen skipper Hinrick Haneman, while on his way to Kumbaravogur, had been killed by Hamburg skipper Kersten Junge when the latter had attacked the former's ship to prevent him from going to Grundarfjörður.[129] Several years later, Hamburg merchants seem to have switched harbours with the English in Ríf: Hans Huge complained that English merchants from Grundarfjörður had taken his fish in Ríf in 1531. The English, however, responded that they had gone to Grundarfjörður after they were expelled from Ríf by Huge, and were attacked by men from Hamburg and Bremen, who threatened to kill them and stole their goods from their booths and weapons from their ship.[130]

Afterwards Hamburg merchants seem to have concentrated in Ríf, and Grundarfjörður does not seem to have been used much. In the Hamburg donation register, the harbour is not explicitly mentioned until 1600. However, in the 1552 accounts of Eggert Hannesson (Table 5.1), skipper "Iorgen Meer" (possible Hinrick Meyer, according to the donation register) is mentioned in the harbour,[131] and Hamburg merchants were prohibited from using the harbour as well as Arnarstapi and Ríf in 1563. Afterwards, the Danes did not use the harbour as well, as Hans Gronewold, in applying (unsuccessfully) for a licence for Grundarfjörður and Arnarstapi, made the argument that the Danish merchants were only visiting Ríf.[132] It is also unlikely that Marcus Hess, who received a licence for the harbour together with Arnarstapi and Ríf, made much use of the harbour, as has been sketched above.[133] The same goes for the licence of archbishop Henry III of Bremen in 1584, which was for Grundarfjörður and Nesvogur together; the latter seems to have been used as the main harbour.[134]

From this moment at the latest, Grundarfjörður seems to have been regarded as a dependency of Kumbaravogur or Nesvogur/Stykkishólmur. The licence of Archbishop Henry was given to Count John VII of Oldenburg after his death in 1585, who also had a licence for Kumbaravogur. The account book of

128 *DI* 16:286, 287 (15060128HAM00, 15060100HAM00). See also Section 4.5.
129 *DI* 16:268 (15231103BRE00).
130 *DI* 16:315 (15330200HAM01).
131 *DI* 12:323 (see Table 5.1); SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 114v.
132 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 21 December 1563 (15631221KOB00).
133 See Section 6.3.2 (Arnarstapi).
134 See Section 6.3.6 (Nesvogur).

the Oldenburg merchants in 1585, however, only mentions Kumbaravogur and Nesvogur as trading places, suggesting that Grundarfjörður was not considered a separate harbour.[135] The Danish king had a different opinion about this: when the Count requested a licence in 1596 for all three harbours, the king granted it, but for just two, as Grundarfjörður had been given to the Archbishop of Bremen John Adolf because the Oldenburg merchants did not use the harbour.[136] Bremen merchant Hans Honne was probably trading in Grundarfjörður on behalf of the bishop at this time, as he is known to have requested permission to trade in Grundarfjörður or Landey in 1596 as well.[137] In 1600, the last licence was given to

Figure 6.9: The bay of Kumbaravogur, looking towards the southwest from the trading site at Kaupstaðartangi. Photograph courtesy of Natascha Mehler.

135 SAO 262–1, no. 2 (15850307OLD00).

136 NLO 20, -25, no. 6: request of the count, 19 February (15960219OLD00); answer of the king, 29 March 1596 (15960329FRE00).

137 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15960000BRE00). Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 111, mention that according to the Danish tax registers of governor Brostrup Gedde in 1596, a Johan van Lehe from Hamburg sailed to Grundarfjörður. However, there is no person with that name in the confraternity records, nor is there a ship to Grundarfjörður in the donation register in that year. It is possible that Gedde made a mistake here, and that the merchant was actually from Bremen. In 1600, sheriff Carsten Bake mentioned a Bremen merchant by the name of Hinrich von Lehe as being in Snæfellsnes (SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 16001230BRE00).

Johan Harvest from Segeberg. He must have partnered with Hamburg merchant Herman Beverborch, who appears on ships to Grundarfjörður in the donation register during the three years that the licence was valid.

6.3.5 Kumbaravogur / Landey

Names in the sources:

Kumbaravogur: Cummerwag; Kombarewage; Kombarwoge; Kommerwoghe; Kummerwagen; Kummerwoghe

Landey: Landtoh; Landoch; Landog; Landöhe; Landø

Kumbaravogur on Snæfellsnes is a small bay located to the north of Bjarnarhöfn farm. A headland known as Kaupstaðartangi ('headland of the trading site') contains ruins of *nausts* (boathouses), a building, and an enclosure, which are believed to have been the trading site of German and Danish merchants. East of the bay there is a small tidal island called Landey, on which there are some more ruins, which are believed to be the trading site "Landoh" mentioned in some Bremen and Oldenburg sources at the end of the sixteenth century (Figure 6.10).

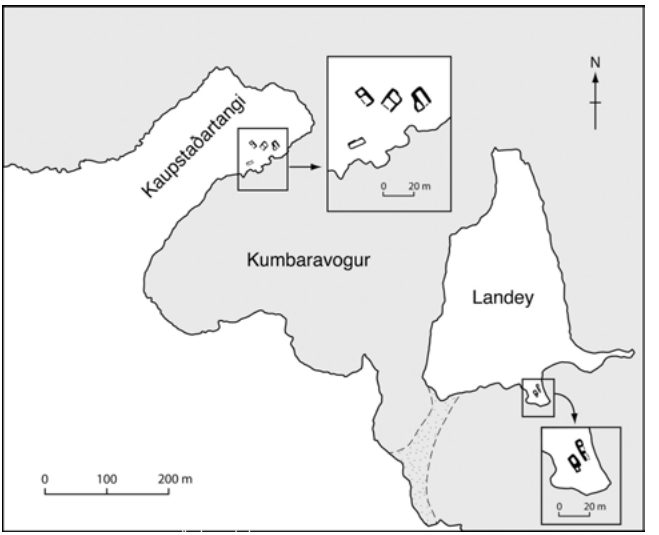

Figure 6.10: Map of the ruins of the trading sites in Kumbaravogur. Reproduced with permission from Mehler and Gardiner, "On the Verge of Colonialism", 5.

The site at Kaupstaðartangi was surveyed archaeologically,[138] and in 2016 a trench was dug through one on the buildings at Landey, which revealed turf walls, a fireplace, and some ceramic fragments that could be dated to the sixteenth century. Analysis of the ceramics has shown that they were produced in the vicinity of Bremen, confirming the written evidence for Bremen and Oldenburg activity there.[139]

As indicated above, in Danish times Kumbaravogur was usually licensed together with Grundarfjörður or Stykkishólmur, and the trading site was moved to Grundarfjörður in 1662. In German times, Kumbaravogur was used as a trading site in its own right and seems to have been more important than Grundarfjörður and Nesvogur/Stykkishólmur, which were hardly used until the late sixteenth century. It was probably visited exclusively by Bremen merchants from the late fifteenth century on, as they claimed in 1564 to have used the harbour for almost 70 years.[140] As we have seen, skipper Hinrick Haneman sailed to the harbour in 1522; the Bremen merchants who attacked the English in Grundarfjörður are very likely to have come from Kumbaravogur as well.[141]

In the 1560s, the merchants in Kumbaravogur were faced with the same problems as the Bremen merchants in Búðir, in the form of interference first from Hamburg merchants who were expelled from nearby Arnarstapi, Ríf, and Grundarfjörður in 1563,[142] and subsequently from Danish counselor Birge Trolle, who received a licence together with Búðir in 1566. After Tyleman Zerneman pleaded their case at the Danish court,[143] the harbour was returned to Bremen merchants, this time to Johan Munsterman, who received a licence in October 1567.

Bremen control of Kumbaravogur ended when Munsterman was beset with misfortune in 1576. In that year, his ship sank in the harbour during a storm. He and his partners acquired a new ship, but this one also wrecked on the return journey in the Weser river in 1578. Munsterman and 28 other men on board lost their

138 Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 415–418.

139 The ceramics were analysed by Torbjörn Brorsson and Natascha Mehler, who were kind enough to share their preliminary results. Oldenburg merchants are known to have acquired most of their commodities for the Icelandic trade in Bremen: see Section 2.6.

140 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): complaint about Hamburg interference, 26 February 1564 (15640226BRE00).

141 See Section 6.3.4 (Grundarfjörður).

142 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 26 February 1564 (15640226BRE00).

143 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Tyleman Zerneman, 26 September 1567 (15670926BRE00).

lives, and nothing of the cargo could be salvaged.[144] Other persons involved in the enterprise found themselves in financial trouble because of the accident, such as Clawes Monnickhusen, who had borrowed money to freight Munsterman's ship and now could not repay what he owed. Thanks to this event, his account book is still extant, which probably ended up in the Bremen archive as evidence in the court case of his creditors against him.[145] The account book lists where the customers of the merchants in Kumbaravogur lived in 1558, which gives us an impression of the extent of the trading district (Figure 4.4). This fits quite well with the statement from a document from 1567, in which the district of Kumbaravogur is described as reaching from Ríf and Ólafsvík to Flatey,[146] with some customers even living outside this region.

Munsterman's widow and former companions requested permission to keep using the harbour, as they were afraid that competitors from Lübeck, Hamburg, or others from Bremen would take over.[147] However, they lost the licence to a merchant called Joachim Kolling from the East Frisian village of Hooksiel, who was assisted in this matter by the Count of Oldenburg.[148] Kolling had some years of experience in the Icelandic trade out of Hamburg and/or Bremen: in 1572 he shows up as servant and in 1577 as merchant on a Hamburg ship to Ríf.[149] Now he saw an opportunity to start his own business. He founded a trading company and chartered his brother-in-law, Bremen skipper Roleff Gerdes, to sail for him. The latter, however, was forbidden by the Bremen city council to sail for Kolling, on the penalty of being expelled from the city, probably after complaints from Munsterman's heirs. It is therefore likely that Kolling was not able to visit Kumbaravogur in 1580.[150] In the meantime, the harbour was probably used by the Bremen merchants in nearby Nesvogur. In 1580, governor Johan Bockholt stated that Heine Ratke from Bremen had been trading in Kumbaravogur, although he

144 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): request from Munsterman's widow, 9 February 1579 (15790209BRE00).

145 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch" (2001): 27. Monnickhusen (possibly his father) is first recorded in Kumbaravogur as a skipper in 1552: *DI* 12:323 (Table 5.1).

146 "von das Reff und Wyck bis Flattoy". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Tyleman Zerneman, 26 September 1567 (15670926BRE00).

147 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 9 February 1579 (15790209BRE00).

148 Kohl, "Oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 37; Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 71–72. See Section 3.5.5.

149 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), ff. 228v, 249r.

150 NLO 20, -25, no. 6; SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint from 6 April 1580 (15800406OLD00); Kohl, "Oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 38; Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 72–73. See Section 7.2.1.

had no licence for the harbour.[151] Ratke is mentioned as having been to Kumbaravogur some years earlier, where he had interfered in the business of Johan Munsterman, together with Dirick Vasmer, who had been in a harbour less than one hour sailing from Kumbaravogur.[152] Dirick Vasmer is later mentioned in relation to Nesvogur, which is indeed very close to Kumbaravogur. (Figure 6.11)[153]

Kolling did not enjoy his licence for a long time. In 1585, the Count of Oldenburg requested a licence for Kumbaravogur in his own name, as well as for Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður, because Kolling had proved unreliable.[154] The reason for the takeover was probably that Kolling got into financial trouble in 1583, and was unable to repay the money he owed to Luder Ottersen.[155] The licence was granted in March, and the one for Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður in June, after the holder of the licence for the latter two harbours, prince-archbishop Henry III of Bremen, died in April.[156] A new company was founded in Oldenburg and a ship bought in Emden, which was skippered by Clawes Kock. From the account books of the company we have a good overview of how this was organised. In 1585, the ship only sailed to Kumbaravogur (probably because the licence for Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður had not yet been issued at the time the ship left Oldenburg); the next year we find six merchants who were stationed in Kumbaravogur and another six in Nesvogur.[157]

The Oldenburg licences for Kumbaravogur were renewed a few times until the introduction of the Danish monopoly. During this entire period, however, Bremen merchants were able to retain their presence in the area by acquiring licences for harbours nearby.[158] On the grounds that Oldenburg merchants had not visited

151 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: letter from Bockholt, 31 July 1581 (15810713BES00). Bockholt also stated that he had received a letter from Heine Ratke to his wife, in which Ratke had slandered Bockholt. The letter was brought to him by Kolling, who claimed that it was delivered to him by a schoolboy who found it in a Bremen alley, where it had been lost by Ratke's children who had been playing with it. Bockholt, however, did not believe this story and assumed that Kolling had found the letter in Roleff Gerdes's house and brought it to him in anger; Bockholt assured Kolling that the letter in no way influenced his attitude. This also shows that Kolling did sail to Iceland in 1581. See also Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 73–74.

152 "nicht gahr eine stunde varendes von ihme gelegen". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: final plea of Bernd Losekanne against Christoffer Meyer (15760200BRE00).

153 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaints about Oldenburg merchants, 27 September 1583 (15830927BRE00).

154 NLO, 20, -25, no. 6; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 13 February (15850213OLD00).

155 See Section 7.2.6.

156 Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 74–76.

157 SAO 262–1, no. 2 (15850307OLD00); Kohl, "Der oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 43–46.

158 See Sections 6.3.4 (Grundarfjörður), 6.3.6 (Nesvogur/Stykkishólmur), and 6.3.7 (Flatey).

Kumbaravogur and Nesvogur in two years, Carsten Bake from Bremen requested and was granted a licence for Nesvogur and Landey in 1593.[159] A dispute in Nesvogur in 1597, sparked by the Bremen merchants' claim that the single Oldenburg ship was too small to serve the needs of the local population, was probably the reason why Harmen Kloppenborg, the Oldenburg merchant, chartered the ship of Bremen skipper Dirick Walleman to sail with him to Kumbaravogur. However, the strategy backfired. In 1598, Kloppenborg sued Walleman for having secretly traded with his brother, who had been in a harbour nearby (probably Grundarfjörður or Stykkishólmur) and had allowed a load of stockfish to get wet, so that it spoiled.[160] Finally, when the count requested a renewal of the licence for Kumbaravogur and Nesvogur in 1599, with an extension to Grundarfjörður and Landey, the extension was not granted because those harbours had already been given to someone else.[161] In the case of Grundarfjörður, this was Johan Harvest from Segeberg, but it is unclear who was using Landey, as it is not mentioned in any licence at the time.

6.3.6 Nesvogur / Stykkishólmur

Names in the sources:

Nesvogur: Naßwage; Neschwagen; Neswag; Neßvoge; Nestwage

Stykkishólmur: Stichholm; Stickelshalm; Stikeshollm; Stickeningesholm; Styckingshölen

Standing on the former trading site of Kumbaravogur, one can see the present-day town of Stykkishólmur across the bay in the distance, which is only ten kilometres away (Figure 6.11). The settlement is located on the northern tip of the Grunnasundsnes peninsula, which is separated from the mainland of Snæfellsnes by a long and narrow bay, Nesvogur. This might be the bay that gave the name to the trading site known as "Neswage", although the bay seems too shallow for an ocean-going vessel to anchor in. The trading site was probably located on a small peninsula to the southwest of the town, called Búðanes ('headland of the booths'), where some ruins are located that might have been the trading booths of foreign merchants. The current harbour, located north of the town, might be the place known as a separate harbour, "Stickingsholm", in the late 1590s.

159 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): request, 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE00).
160 NLO 20, -25, no. 6: report of the court case, 19 August 1598 (15980819OLD00).
161 NLO 20, -25, no. 6: letter of Christian IV, 22 December 1599 (15991222KOB00).

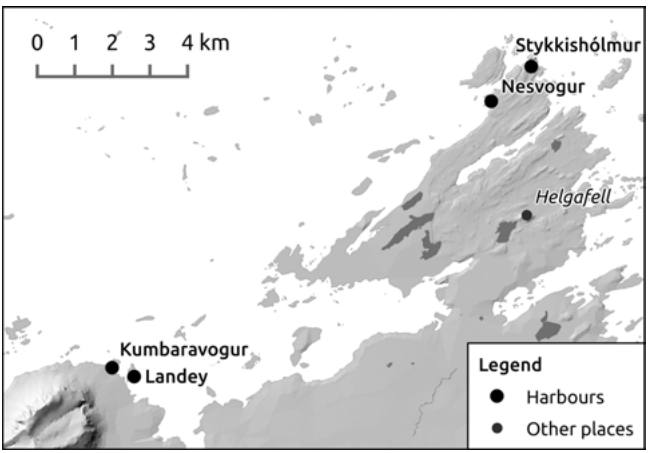

Figure 6.11: Map of the trading stations around Kumbaravogur and Nesvogur. See Figure 6.5 for location.

Although Stykkishólmur was an important settlement, in proximity to the fishing grounds of the many small islands in Breiðafjörður, the monastery of Helgafell, and the local thing site just south of the town, it was overshadowed by Kumbaravogur initially.[162] The first mentions of foreign traders in the harbour Nesvogur are Evert Hoveman, Dirick Vasmer, and Hinrick Salomon from Bremen, who claimed in 1582 that they had sailed there for the first time seventeen years earlier,[163] and the following year Hoveman and Johan Koster claimed that they had sailed there for the first time sixteen years earlier.[164] This leads to the first visit being around 1566, when Birge Trolle was issued the licence for Kumbaravogur, so that Bremen merchants started to sail to Nesvogur when they were expelled from Kumbaravogur. They seem to have established a more or less permanent presence in Nesvogur, from where they maintained their ties with Kumbaravogur as much as possible. When Johan Munsterman's widow requested that she be allowed to continue sending a ship to Kumbaravogur in 1579, she mentioned Nesvogur as well.[165]

Though Nesvogur was not given to Joachim Kolling when he was granted the licence for Kumbaravogur, the merchants in Nesvogur feared that they would lose

162 Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 17–63.
163 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): complaint from 13 February 1582 (15820213BRE00).
164 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint from 27 September 1583 (15830927BRE00).
165 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 9 February 1579 (15790209BRE00).

their harbour should an accident occur, as had happened with Kumbaravogur. Their fear was not unfounded: when Dirick Vasmer's ship was damaged on the way to Iceland in 1583 and had to return to Bremen, the merchants asked the archbishop Henry III of Bremen to help them prevent someone else from taking over the harbour.[166] However, the archbishop, who had applied unsuccessfully for a licence in Iceland earlier that year, was granted the licence himself instead, together with Grundarfjörður.[167] He subsequently hired Bremen skipper Bruning Nagel to sail there for him.[168] Of course the merchants in Nesvogur were not amused, and the Bremen city council decided in February 1585 that Johan Koster, Nagel, and Christoffer Meyer had to sail together, whereby Nagel would own a sixth part of their ship, and that they would have to buy a bigger ship next year.[169] However, the Nesvogur soap opera was to be continued. In April the same year, archbishop Henry died, rendering his licence invalid. The merchants requested a new licence for themselves, not knowing it had already been promised to the count of Oldenburg, who had applied for a licence for Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður a few months before.[170]

Bremen merchants saw an opportunity to re-establish their presence in Nesvogur when Bremen merchant Carsten Bake was made sheriff of Snæfellsnes in 1593, after he had lost two licences in a row.[171] Bake, who knew that the Count of Oldenburg had not renewed his licence after the death of King Frederick II, saw an opportunity and requested a licence for Nesvogur and Landey for himself, which was granted for three years in April 1593. He claimed in his request that Oldenburg merchants had not come to Nesvogur and Kumbaravogur for two years,[172] which was probably true,[173] as the Oldenburg merchants only complained

166 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint from 27 September 1583 (15830927BRE00).

167 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: correspondence between Henry III and the Danish king, 1583/4 (15830612BRV00, 15830621HAD00, 15831024DRI00, 15840422BRV00, 15840503SKA00, 15840503SKA01).

168 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: declaration of Henry III, 10 August 1584 (15840810BRV00).

169 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: verdict of the Bremen city council, 3 February 1585 (15850203BRE00).

170 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: request from Bremen, November 1585 (15851122BRE00, 15851120BRE00; also in RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15); answer from Frederick II, 17 December (15851217KRO00).

171 See Sections 6.2.7 (Hólmur), 6.3.7 (Flatey), and 4.4.1.1.

172 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE01).

173 Bremen merchants had complained in 1589 that no Oldenburg ship had visited Nesvogur in two years (SAB 2-R.11.ff. – 15890906BRE00). It seems that the Oldenburg merchants experienced major difficulties in organising the trade, and had financial troubles. At least one case in 1594 hints at this: after the death of skipper Clawes Kock, who owned a fourth part of the ship, Hamburg merchants Bernd Salefeld, (who traded in Ríf) and Daniel Moers, to whom he was heavily indebted, wanted their money back. The answer of the Oldenburg

about the situation in August 1594, after more than a year had passed. Merchant Harmen Kloppenborg had come to Nesvogur that year and found Bremen merchant Hans Honne there, who had burned the booths of the Oldenburg merchants to the ground and denied Kloppenborg access to the harbour.[174] The count complained to the king about the situation, and was told that he should have renewed his licence in time; however, he was promised that he would receive Nesvogur again once Bake's licence expired.[175]

To avoid losing their access to Nesvogur to Oldenburg again, Bremen merchants played another trick. With the help of Carsten Bake, Heinrich Alberts and Albert Kote received a licence in the winter of 1595/6 for the harbour Stykkishólmur, only 1.5 km from Nesvogur. The Oldenburg merchants complained that Stykkishólmur actually belonged to Nesvogur, whereupon the king cancelled the licence for Alberts and Kote.[176] The latter then collected testimonies from inhabitants of the area, in which they stated that Stykkishólmur and Nesvogur were indeed two separate harbours.[177] Moreover, other testimonies by the inhabitants claimed that the Oldenburg merchants did not bring enough goods, as they sailed with one ship of 40 lasts, whereas Evert Hoveman and Heine Ratke had always sailed with two ships of *c.* 50 fifty lasts each, and finally that the Oldenburg merchants had sold them bad flour mixed with clay.[178] Although the last statement might have been a mean attempt to discredit the Oldenburg merchants, they do seem to have lacked the capacity and means to bring enough commodities for the district. This explains why the Bremen merchants were ultimately successful in retaining their presence in the area. After a failed attempt of the Oldenburg merchants to hire an additional ship from Bremen to sail with them to Kumbaravogur the next year,[179] the Bremen licence for Stykkishólmur was renewed in September 1598.

Icelandic company (NLO 20, -25, no. 6 – 15941214OLD00) suggests that they did not have enough capital to repay what he owed. See Section 7.2.1.

174 NLO 20, -25, no. 6: anonymous complaint, 26 August 1594 (15940826OLD00).

175 NLO 20, -25, no. 6: 20 November 1594 (15941120FRE00); Ásgeirsson and Ásgeirsson, *Saga Stykkishólms*, 76.

176 NLO 20, -25, no. 6: March 1597 (15970300OLD00); 4 April 1597 (15970404KOB00).

177 NLO 20, -25, no. 6; SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (15970716STY00, 15970708STY00).

178 NLO 20, -25, no. 6; SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15970420BRE00, 15970614STY00, 15970725HEL00, 15971102BRE00).

179 See Section 6.3.5 (Kumbaravogur).

6.3.7 Flatey

Names in the sources: Flattohe; Flatte; Flattoge; Flatøey; Flattöh; Flettoge; Flottog

Flatey is a small (flat) island in the middle of the bay of Breiðafjörður (Figure 6.12). It was located on the border between the trading districts of Kumbaravogur/Nesvogur and of the harbours in Barðaströnd. A Bremen document from 1588 mentions that the licence Johan Munsterman held for Kumbaravogur granted him the right to trade in Flatey, which was "not a separate harbour, but just a small remote place on an island".[180] Due to its remote location from the harbours mentioned above, it became a trading place in its own right in the 1580s and 1590s. The trade here was discontinued in Danish times, much to the disappointment of the locals.[181]

To the north of the island, the ridge of a crater sticking up out of Breiðafjörður provided a fairly secure natural harbour known as Hafnarey ('harbour island'). The trading site was initially on the northern side of Flatey, facing Hafnarey, in a bay called Grýluvogur. Between Hafnarey and Grýluvogur is an inlet that was known as Þýskuvör ('German landing place'), where the ruins of German buildings were allegedly still visible in the eighteenth century.[182] North of Flatey, on the northern coast of Breiðafjörður on the peninsula Svínanes, there is a small bay called Kumbaravogur with ruins that are connected by local tradition to the presence of German traders (Figure 6.12).[183] If this is correct, then this site must have been used by the merchants from Flatey, since there is no direct mention of the place in the written sources, and Flatey was the only harbour in the vicinity known to have been used by Germans.

Although quite a few sources mention Flatey, they provide conflicting accounts or are hard to interpret. Flatey is first mentioned when a licence for the harbour was issued to Lübeck merchant Hinrick Sluter in December 1579. Sluter does not appear in any other source, so it is uncertain whether the licence was ever used. In 1582, Carsten Bake from Bremen mentions that he had visited the

180 "so doch keine sonderbare havinge, dann alleinn einn kleinn abgelegenn ortt eines eillandts seinn soll". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Bremen ambassadors, 18 October 1588 (15880118BRE00).
181 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 303.
182 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:540–541; Bjarni F. Einarsson, "Mjaltastúlkan í gígnum", *Árbók Hins íslenzka fornleifafélags*, no. 90 (1993): 134; Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 408.
183 Mark Gardiner, Conor Graham, and Natascha Mehler, "Survey of Archaeological Remains at Svínanes, Reykhólahreppur, Iceland", OITIS Field Report, no. 2, 2011.

harbour, and that he had been there 30 years earlier; he states that it has been much improved in the meantime.[184] The presence of Bake, who had been trading in Nesvogur before, suggests that the use of Flatey as a harbour seems to have been part of the attempts of Bremen merchants to retain their presence in the area around Kumbaravogur.

Bake's statements, however, are more confusing than enlightening. He also claimed to have received a licence for the island in 1583 for four years, and that he then lost the licence to an Icelander in 1588, which does not fit.[185] A request of Hamburg merchants for a licence for Flatey in 1589 states that Bake first used the harbour in 1586, which makes the loss of the licence in 1588 plausible.[186] If we accept Bake's statement that he visited Flatey for the first time in 1582, he must have traded there for a few years without a licence. The Hamburg request was denied because Bake received a prolongation of his licence on 12 September 1589, but on 25 September of the same year a licence was indeed issued to an Icelander, Páll Jónsson. Bake's licence was probably cancelled, since he was subsequently granted a licence for Hólmur.[187]

Páll Jónsson, interestingly, just three days after receiving the licence declared that he was partnering with a Bremen citizen called Björn Jónsson.[188] It is not known who this person is. The name suggests an Icelander who had settled in Bremen, but it was not unusual for Germans to be referred to by a patronym in Icelandic sources. Aðils suggests that this was Bernd Salefeld, who would acquire the licence in October 1593.[189] It is unclear on what source Aðils based this claim: the 1593 licence only mentions the name Björn Jónsson. Moreover, Bernd Salefeld was from Hamburg and held a licence for Ríf at the time. What *does* fit, however, is that both Björn and Bernd Salefeld died in 1596, after which the licence for Flatey was given to Danish merchants. In Ríf, the licence was taken over by Bernd's son, Bernd Salefeld the Younger, who interestingly received a licence for Flatey in 1600 after he lost access to Ríf.[190]

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184 "Item yck Karsten Bake hebbe de havynge yn Yslant Flatto geheten vor erst myth minen lyve unde gude up gesegelt das do formalß yn 30 yaren mene Dydesche scheppe gelegen hebben unde iß nu van mynen yn segelen koninckIyke moyestat syne armen under danen wol eyn grote vor betert geworden". SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15820000BRE01).

185 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): letter of 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE01).

186 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): request of 4 July 1589 (15890704HAM01).

187 See Section 6.2.7 (Hólmur).

188 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): statement of 28 September (15890928KOB00).

189 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 59 n. 3; See also Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 271n13.

190 See Section 6.3.3 (Ríf).

It is also difficult to figure out who was trading in Flatey after 1596. A note on the back of the 1593 licence mentions Niels Busk and Frederik Leyel from Helsingør as having an interest in using the harbour, and after a dispute arose between them in 1598, they asked a man from Bremen (probably sheriff Carsten Bake) to mediate.[191] However, klaus Ericksen from Copenhagen is mentioned as holding the licence for three years in January 1596, and only two years after that a certain Johan Vogit from Bremen is mentioned as also holding the licence for three years. This only makes sense if Claus Ericksen was sailing on behalf of Busk and Leyel, and that the latter two ceased trading when they came into conflict in 1598. Johan Vogit also appears as a servant of the Danish factor Luder Ottersen from Lübeck in the latter's request for a licence for Hólmur in 1593,[192] but either the licence was not used or they ran into difficulties, as Bernd Salefeld the Younger was granted a licence for Flatey in 1600 before Vogit's licence had expired.

6.4 The Westfjords

The northwestern region known as Vestfirðir (Westfjords) relied heavily on fishing, which brought the region great wealth from the start of the fish export trade. A high density of fishing settlements on the many bays and harbours is attested, mainly in the fjords along the Greenland Strait and the southern fjords of Ísafjarðardjúp.[193] Correspondingly, many harbours were used in the area in German and Danish times, which were roughly divided into two districts: a southern district around the fjords Patreksfjörður, Arnarfjörður, and the northern coast of Breiðafjörður, covering the *sýsla* Barðaströnd; and a northern one around Dýrafjörður and the bay Ísafjarðardjúp, covering Ísafjarðarsýsla (Figure 6.12). However, the many different trading places, and in extension, the many different names used for harbours and licences, complicate the identification of the harbours.

191 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9): letter of 28 January 1598 (15980128VIB00).

192 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15930000XXX00). See Sections 6.2.7 (Hólmur) and 7.2.6.

193 The fishing economy in this region is well known, due to the archaeological and historical work of Ragnar Edvardsson. See Edvardsson, "Commercial and Subsistance Fishing", 49–67; "Marine Resources".

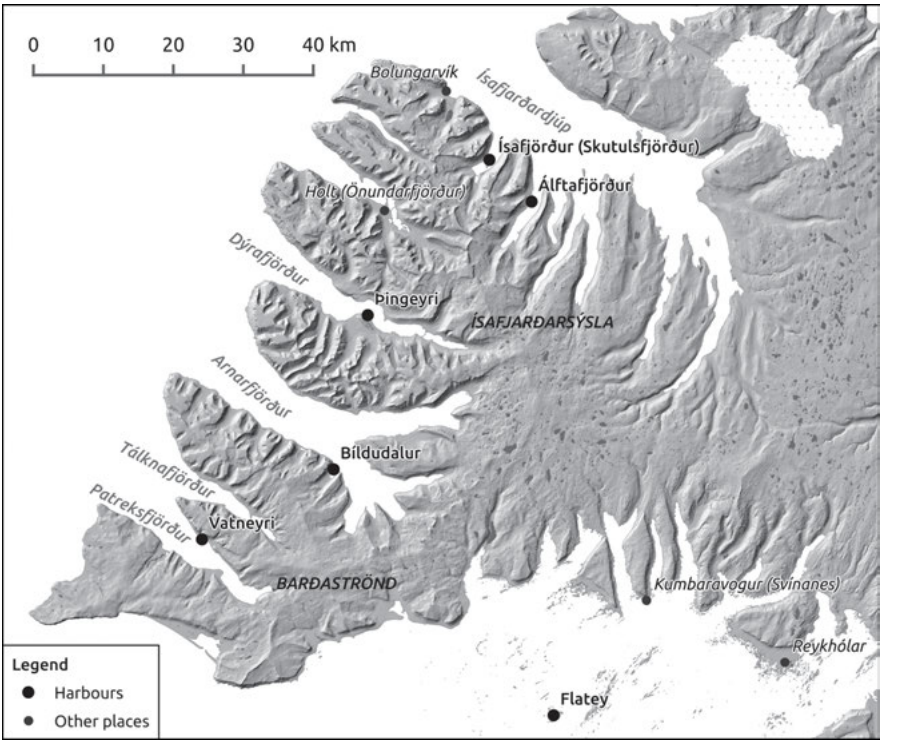

Figure 6.12: Map of trading and other sites in the Westfjords. See Figure 6.1 for location.

6.4.1 Barðaströnd: Patreksfjörður, Tálknafjörður, and Arnarfjörður

Names in the sources:

Barðaströnd: Badestrandt (syssel); Bardelsstrandtsissel; Bardenstrand (gebiete); Barnstrandersyssell; Berentstrant

Patreksfjörður: Padersvorde; Patensforde; Patersfiord; Patresfiord; Patrisforde; Patrisvörde; Petersforde; Wathnow.

Bíldudalur: Bildalsforde; Bildal; Bildedal

Tálknafjörður: Tolckesfordt; Tolckevörde; Tolcksforde

The harbours Patreksfjörður and Bíldudalur in Arnarfjörður were characterised as fishing harbours in Danish times and usually used together. This was also the case when the Germans sailed to this area during the sixteenth century, perhaps in tandem with visiting trading sites on the northern coast of Breiðafjörður, especially around Svínanes (Figure 6.12). The Breiðafjörður trading sites being far away from those in Patreksfjörður and Bíldudalur may have been one of the reasons why

Flatey was first used as a harbour in its own right in the 1580s.[194] The Danes did not continue the trade in this region.[195]

Before 1565, Patreksfjörður and Bíldudalur were either not used or were considered part of the region around Ísafjörður. The donation register of the confraternity of St Anne mentions ships returning from "Iseforde" or more generally *vor westen* ('in the west'), but never specifically from these harbours before 1565. The records of Eggert Hannesson also do not list a German ship in Barðaströnd.[196] It seems reasonable to assume that these harbours were used in earlier times, though, as Patreksfjörður is one of the harbours offered to Hamburg in 1565 as requiring 20 lasts of flour annually, and Tálknafjörður and Bíldudalur together 35 lasts (Table 5.2).[197] Taken together these fjords approximate therefore the economic value of Hafnarfjörður. Moreover, a complaint from merchants from Stade from 1578 claims that Barðastrandasýsla was visited "traditionally [. . .] with one ship" every year.[198] It is therefore quite possible that many of the ships in the donation register that are difficult to link to a specific harbour returned from the Westfjords.

A licence for Patreksfjörður and Bíldudalur was granted in 1565 to Gert Bomhofer, who is referred to in the licence as "wor suouell luterer", i.e. probably the refiner of the recently built royal sulphur refinery in Copenhagen.[199] Because no sulphur is known to have been mined around the Westfjords, and the licence explicitly forbids trade in it, it is probable that Bomhofer was procuring train oil from the fisheries in the Westfjords, an essential component in the refining of sulphur.[200] It is not known how long Bomhofer used the harbour. In 1567, Margaretha, the widow of Lübeck burgomaster Bartholomeus

194 See Section 6.3.7 (Flatey).

195 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 303–304.

196 *DI* 12:323 (Table 5.1).

197 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II. 16) (15650000XXX00). The harbours are called "Patersfiordt", "Tolkefiordt", and "Billingervoge" in this source; the identification of the last as Bíldudalur is uncertain. The German name shares more similarities with the fishing settlement Bolungarvík near Ísafjörður, but this was far from Tálknafjörður, with Dýrafjörður in between, which is also mentioned as a separate harbour in the document ("Direfiordt"). It therefore makes no sense that it was being taken together with Tálknafjörður. The suffix *-voge* in the name seems to recall Bíldudalsvogur, the bay near Bíldudalur, whereas the Icelandic suffix *-vík* was usually germanised as *-wick* (cf. Grindavík, Keflavík, Kumbaravogur, Nesvogur). Both suffixes do indicate a small bay or inlet, however.

198 "die Barnstrandersyssell, in welcher die Padersvorde gelegen von altershero auch nicht hoher und mehr, als mit einem schiffe besiegelt worden". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15780120STA00).

199 *DI* 14:240 (15650316BYR00); Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 194–195.

200 Mehler, 193–94. See Section 2.2.

Tinappel who had lost her former husband's licence for Dýrafjörður, applied for a licence for the three harbours in Barðastrandasýsla instead, and was granted a licence for "Alnfiord wdj Issefiordsyssel". It is unclear where this harbour was: one of the options is Arnarfjörður, the northern side of which is located in Ísafjarðarsýsla, but no trading sites are known here (Figure 6.12).[201]

In 1576, Stade merchants (undoubtedly in cooperation with Hamburg merchants) applied for a licence for the harbours Patreksfjörður and Ísafjörður, "and everything in between", i.e. the entire Westfjords. They claimed this area was traditionally visited by two ships annually, one to Barðaströnd and one to Ísafjörður.[202] Apparently the geography of this region was largely unknown to the Danish authorities, as treasurer Christoffer Valckendorf could not find Patreksfjörður in the register of Icelandic harbours, and therefore assumed that it was Álftafjörður. When the Stade merchants sailed north with two ships the next year, sheriff Eggert Hannesson refused to set the trade in Barðaströnd, as they only had a licence for Ísafjörður and Álftafjörður, both in Ísafjarðarsýsla, and therefore could not sell all their goods. They complained about this situation to the Danish king in 1578,[203] who probably had the error corrected. After their licence expired, Luder Ottersen from Lübeck received one for three years, this time for Vatneyri in Patreksfjörður (Figure 6.12). Vatneyri must have been the main trading place in the region, with the licence probably encompassing the entire region.

In 1586 at the latest, the harbours in Barðastrandasýsla came into the hands of Hamburg merchants. Hans von Kleve acquired a licence that year for "Wathnow in Bardestrandt gebede", i.e. Vatneyri. However, he is attested in the donation register from 1581 onwards, so it is likely that he was sailing under the Stade flag and for Luder Ottersen before. He held his last licence, granted in 1598, together with his son Claus von Kleve. The latter sailed for Danish merchants in the first years of the Danish trade monopoly. In 1604, he claimed that he and his father had traded in Patreksfjörður and Bíldudalur for over 40 years as part of making the complaint that he had been contracted to sail there by merchants from Helsingør, and that the Hamburg merchants formerly trading in Hafnarfjörður were causing him difficulty out of pure jealousy.[204]

201 Aðils, Monopolhandel, 305; Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:563–568. See Section 6.4.2 (Ísafjarðarsýsla).

202 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 23): request, 23 December (15761223STA00); *KB* 1576–1579, 151.

203 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 20 January 1578 (15780120STA00).

204 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: complaint of Claus von Kleve, 17 March 1604 (16040317HAM00).

6.4.2 Ísafjarðarsýsla: Dýrafjörður / Ísafjörður / Álftafjörður

Names in the sources:

Dýrafjörður: Direfiordt; Durefiordt; Dyreforde; Dürförde

Ísafjörður: Isefiordt; Iseforth; Isevorde; Isförde; Issefort; Ißevorde; Ißfiordt; Issfoerde in Schiffelsforth; Schuffelsfiordt; Schoterforde; Skittelsford; Skotzfiordt

Álftafjörður: Altforde; Altenfoerde; Altervorde

Like the fjords in Barðastrandasýsla, the fjords in Ísafjarðarsýsla were usually used together. In Danish times there were two districts: one around Dýrafjörður, covering the western fjords; and one around Ísafjarðardjúp. In good fishing years, there was enough produce to load two ships, but since this was not always the case, the Danes often combined the two districts and sailed there with one ship. In German times, a similar pattern can be discerned. The regions were sometimes licensed separately, sometimes combined, and when combined, the number of ships sailing there varied from one to two per year.

In Dýrafjörður, the trading place was located in Þingeyri at the middle of the fjord from the fourteenth century onwards.[205] Ísafjörður was a small peninsula halfway into Skutulsfjörður (Figure 6.12), on which the modern town of Ísafjörður is located, and was referred to by both the name of the peninsula and of the fjord, of which the latter was the oldest. It was counted among the safest harbours in Iceland. Similar to the situation in Skutulsfjörður, in Álftafjörður a trading site was located on the small headland Langeyri, where in the eighteenth century it is mentioned that there were ruins of a German trading station with ten rectangular and four round buildings with fireplaces where train oil was cooked and a wall protecting the site on the land side.[206] Aðils considers this place the headquarters of the German traders in the Westfjords, a claim supported by the 1565 list of harbours offered to Hamburg (Table 5.2). Dýrafjörður ("Direfiordt") and Ísafjörður ("Skotzfiordt") are mentioned as requiring fifteen lasts of flour each, whereas Álftafjörður ("Altefiordt") required double that amount.

English traders were also active here in the fourteenth century, but they probably used the fjords north of Ísafjarðardjúp.[207] Conflicts with the Germans are not known from this region. Ísafjörður is mentioned for the first time in the donation register of St Anne's confraternity in 1544, but had probably been used for a long time before that by merchants from Hamburg. We

205 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 170.
206 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 305–306.
207 Aðils, 306.

hear about the region again in August 1565, when Dýrafjörður in Ísafjarðarsýsla was licensed to Bartholomeus Tinappel, burgomaster of Lübeck and commander of the Danish fleet during the Northern Seven Years' war. In his request for the licence, he stated that Hamburg merchants had sailed to the harbour before with a ship of 70 lasts.[208] After his death the next year in a battle near Visby, the licence was given to Christof Vogler, the secretary of Segeberg castle. Tinappel's widow Margaretha tried multiple times to continue her former husband's business in the area,[209] and was eventually granted a licence for "Alnfiord" in September 1567. It is unclear which harbour is meant by this, as she had requested a licence for the fjords in Barðaströnd before, but most likely this was Álftafjörður.[210] In March of the following year Vogler complained about the interference of Margaretha in his business, to which she replied that her ship had only been there in late 1567 to reclaim outstanding debts.[211] The complaint made clear that Álftafjörður was considered part of Dýrafjörður, and when Vogler's licence was renewed in 1570, the harbour was specified as covering an area between Geirhólmur and Langanes, which corresponded to the entire Ísafjarðarsýsla.[212] It is possible that the Lübeck merchants had sailed here up to this point: in 1599 Hamburg merchant Johan Holtgreve claimed that during Christoffer Valckendorf's time as governor of Iceland (1569–1570), Lübeck merchants had traded in Álftafjörður and Christof Vogler in Dýrafjörður.[213]

In 1577, the licence for Ísafjörður and Álftafjörður was given to merchants from Stade for six years, who would sail there with two ships. They likely received permission to sail to Barðaströnd as well the next year,[214] and evidently left room for one more ship in Ísafjarðarsýsla, as sheriff Eggert Hannesson acquired a licence for Dýrafjörður and Skutulsfjörður in December 1579.[215] He partnered with Hamburg merchants, as he is listed in the confraternity's donation register in 1580, together with Hans von Kleve, who would later trade in Patreksfjörður/Bíldudalur. This was nothing new, however: complaints from the Hamburg companions of Christof Vogler in 1567 show that both Vogler and

208 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 11 August 1565 (15650811KOB00).

209 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22): requests of April 1567 (15670406LUB00, 15670404LUB00); Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 4 August (15670804XXX00). See Section 7.4.3.

210 See also Section 6.4.1 (Barðaströnd).

211 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22): 21 February (15680221LUB00); 6 March (15680306LUB00).

212 "aldt forschreffne syssell emellom Gerholm och Langemoesse". *DI* 15:266 (15700329ROS00); see Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1877, 1:619.

213 RAK 27 (Suppl. II, 19): request from 1599 (15990000HAM01).

214 See Section 6.4.1 (Barðaströnd).

215 *KB* 1576–1579, 791

the heirs of Bartholomeus Tinappel were sailing from Hamburg or cooperating with Hamburg merchants.[216] The same must have been the case for the Stade merchants.[217]

Although Hamburg ships had therefore probably never been absent in the Westfjords, they were sailing under their own flag again by 1586 at the latest. That year the region was licensed under the name "Ißeforth gebede in Skittelsforde" to Barteld Elers and Cordt Tacke from Hamburg for four years, who received two licences because they wanted to trade there with two ships. When the licences were renewed in January 1593, Roleff Eys replaced Cordt Tacke. Around this time, we hear about an English presence in the region again, as Eys and Elers complained about English attacks in their request for renewal in 1592.[218]

In 1595, Elers and Eys requested a renewal of their licence for Ísafjörður with an extension to Álftafjörður, with the argument that the inhabitants there had complained that they had to travel too far to trade.[219] This hardly could have been the real reason for the extension, as Álftafjörður was usually considered to be part of the same trading district. It is more likely Roleff Eys was afraid of losing the sole right to trade in the region, as he seems to have had trouble fitting out two ships. Possibly, he lost his trading partner Barteld Elers, who is attested for the last time in the donation register in 1593 (although he is still mentioned in the 1595 request). From 1595 on, only one ship annually from Ísafjörður can be tracked in the register, led by Eys and Conradt Johansen, an Icelander from the region who had settled in Hamburg.[220] Eys's fears almost came true in 1599, when Johan Holtgreve requested a licence for Álftafjörður with the support of lawman Jón Jónsson, who stated that the region had been traditionally supplied by two ships, but now the merchants were only sailing with one ship, which was not enough for the population.[221] The licence was not granted, but little did it help Eys and Johansen, as shortly afterwards the Danish monopoly was introduced.

216 *DI* 15:40 (15670129HAM01); *DI* 14:416 (15670303LUB00).

217 See Section 3.5.4.

218 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): requests from 24 and 29 October 1592 (15921024HAM00, 15921029HAM00), repeated on 16 January 1593 (15930116HAM00).

219 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): request for renewal, 25 November 1595 (15951125HAM01).

220 See Section 4.3.6.

221 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): requests of August 1599 (15990000HAM00, 15990000HAM01, 15990829THI00).

6.5 Northern harbours

German merchants had litte interest in the fjords in the north. The fish catch was lower than in the west, and in cold years, there was often the difficulty of sea ice in the harbours.[222] Húsavík and Eyjafjörður were attractive as harbours for the export of sulphur, due to their proximity to the mines around Mývatn. However, King Frederick II in 1561 prohibited non-Danish foreigners from exporting sulphur, and therefore these harbours were not often used by German merchants afterwards.[223]

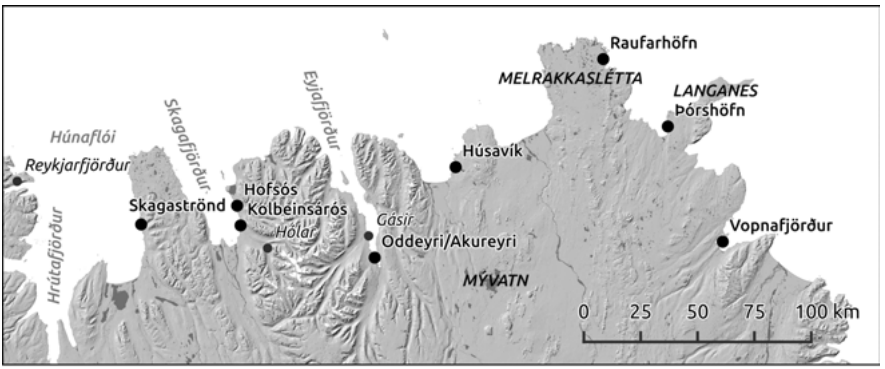

Figure 6.13: Map of harbours and other places in northern Iceland. See Figure 6.1 for location.

6.5.1 Skagaströnd and Hrútafjörður

Names in the sources:

Skagaströnd: Schagenstrandt; Schanstrandt; Schavestrantt; Schogesstrand; Spaakonefeldtshoevede; Spakenefiltshovede; Spokonefieldshøffd

Hrútafjörður: Ruterforde; Rutevor; Rutheforde

Skagaströnd was the main harbour in the region of Strandasýsla, encompassing the coast of Húnaflói bay (Figure 6.13). It was located on the eastern side of the bay, on the grounds of the farm Spákonufellshöfði, by which name the harbour was also known to the Danes.[224] In German sources, we find the name "Spakonefeldtshovede" only in 1602, when a Helsingør ship under

222 See Sections 4.1.2 and 6.2.3.
223 See Section 3.5.3.
224 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 309–310.

Hamburg merchant Johan Holtgreve set course for the harbour.[225] On the western side of the bay was the trading site Reykjarfjörður, which was known in Danish times as a train oil harbour, and which was often used together with Skagaströnd.[226] There is no evidence for German presence here, but it is not impossible that merchants in Skagaströnd visited it now and then.

The first evidence for German presence in Skagaströnd is late; in 1586 a licence was requested by Ratke Timmerman from Hamburg, who stated that the harbour had not been used for several years.[227] The licence was granted for four years, and renewed every three years afterwards, although it changed hands often. In 1590, the licence was issued to Peter Sivers after he claimed that Timmerman did not want to sail there anymore,[228] and after Sivers' death Jurgen Vilter was granted the licence in December 1595, who partnered with Sivers' widow until the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly.

The sparse presence of foreign merchants in the region was particularly inconvenient for the inhabitants of the western and southern coasts of Húnaflói, as Skagaströnd was far away and so they had to travel overland to Ísafjörður or Snæfellsnes to trade. With the backing of lawman Jón Jónsson, German merchants therefore tried to acquire licences for Hrútafjörður, southwest of Skagaströnd. In 1592, the fjord was licensed to Peter Sivers' former servant Laurens Schroder and Jochim Holste. However, they promised not to use it after Sivers complained that it was too close to Skagaströnd, and stated that he sometimes went to Hrútafjörður himself to buy train oil and salmon.[229] In 1594 and 1597, Hans Elers and Jurgen van Winsen made attempts to acquire a licence,[230] which was granted the second time. The enterprise met with many setbacks, however. A complaint from 1603 mentions that two subsequent ships in 1599 and 1600 had been severely damaged, which had forced the merchants to leave their goods behind, and that they had experienced a great deal of difficulty when they went to retrieve those goods in 1602, due to an abundance of sea ice.[231]

225 See Section 6.2.3 (Básendar).

226 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 307–309.

227 RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25): list of harbours licensed to Hamburg (15860213HAM00).

228 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): request of 26 August 1589 (15890826HAM00).

229 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): request, January 1592 (15920112HAM00, 15920115HAM00); declaration of Joachim Holste, 11 February (15920211KOB00); complaint of Peter Sivers, 7 March (15920307HAM00).

230 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 1594 (15940000HAM00); Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18a): 15 November 1597 (15971115ITZ00).

231 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: 8 April 1603 (16030408HAM00). See Section 4.1.2.

6.5.2 Skagafjörður (Hofsós)

Names in the sources:

Skagafjörður: Schagefordt; Schagenfrende; Schagevor; Schavenforde; Skagefjord; Skaufiord

Hofsós: Hoffaus; Hofsas; Hofsos; Hops Aaess; Koffaus

The bay of Skagafjörður was important as an access point to the bishopric of Hólar. The harbour was initially located at the mouth of the Kolbeinsá river, hence the name Kolbeinsárós. While an overview of German licences compiled around 1600 does mention "Kolbensoß", it is stated that a licence for the place was never issued.[232] The focus of trading in Skagafjörður shifted north to Hofsós during the sixteenth century, and licences only mention Hofsós or Skagafjörður. As the second name indicates, the trading district encompassed the entire bay, but it is known that inhabitants from Skagafjörður's western coast sometimes traded in Skagaströnd in Danish times, and those from northern Eyjafjörður in Hofsós (Figure 6.13).[233]

There is evidence for an English presence in Skagafjörður in 1431, when the Englishman John Craxton was bishop of Hólar.[234] In the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, Hamburg merchants must have taken over, and they are mentioned as having overwintered in Kolbeinsárós in 1524.[235] Hamburg skipper Henrick Witte is attested in Hofsós in 1552.[236] However, in December 1564 Danish merchant Hans Nielsen was granted a licence for Hofsós, allegedly because the Hamburg merchants were not bringing commodities of good quality and were deceiving the inhabitants.[237] The real reason for giving the licence to Nielsen must have been related to the sulphur trading ban, which had been proclaimed in 1561: Nielsen had been tasked with leading the two royal ships going to northern Iceland to fetch sulphur for the next ten years.[238] These ships were sailing to Eyjafjörður and Húsavík, from where merchants from Hamburg and Lübeck had been exporting sulphur. It is very probable that Hamburg merchants had moved their sulphur trade to Skagafjörður after 1561, and that this was the illicit trade that prompted the king to give Hans Nielsen the sole right to trade in Hofsós. This is also indicated by the combined licence for Skagafjörður,

232 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8): list of licensed harbours, 1601–1603 (16010000XXX00).
233 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 311–312; Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 168.
234 *DI* 4:516, 518.
235 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 106n11.
236 *DI* 12:323 (Table 5.1).
237 *DI* 14:227 (15641204NYB00).
238 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 45; *KB* 1555–1560, 422.

Eyjafjörður, and Húsavík granted to Copenhagen burgomaster Marcus Hess for four years in 1572: Hess was allowed to trade in sulphur and train oil and made use of the royal ship.[239] When Hess wanted to change the terms of the licence after four years, the king decided to take the sulphur trade into his own hands again, and asked Christoffer Valckendorf to fit out two ships to sail to northern Iceland. The merchant leading the enterprise this time was Rasmus Pedersen.[240] Skagafjörður must not have been part of this trade anymore, as in 1580, bishop Guðbrandur Þorláksson of Hólar was granted a licence for Hofsós, which explicitly prohibited him from trading in Eyjafjörður. He bought a share of a ship from Hamburg, which wrecked on the first voyage.[241]

Hamburg merchants must have returned to Skagafjörður not long after this failed enterprise.[242] In 1586 Matthias Eggers was granted a licence for the harbour with a four-year term, which was renewed every three years after it expired. However, Matthias Eggers is attested in the donation register as having sailed here with Ratke Timmerman (who would receive a licence for Skagaströnd in 1586) in 1580–1585 already. In 1595, Eggers drowned in the Elbe while preparing to sail to Iceland, on which occasion new licences were requested immediately by both Albert Sivers and Matthias' son Hans.[243] A licence was granted to both of them together, and renewed for the last time in 1598.

6.5.3 Eyjafjörður (Akureyri)

Names in the sources: Egefjord; Eyaforde; Eyeforde; Oddenfiordt; Oevarder; Oeverde; Oevorde; Oyefordt; Ødefior havn; Ugforde

239 *NRR* 2, pp. 4–5 (15720120NYB00); *KB* 1571–1575, 229–230. Hamburg merchants complained a year later that despite Marcus Hess having the licence, duke Adolf of Holstein-Gottorp was preparing a ship to sail there, under the Hamburg skipper Herman van Horsten. (RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) – 15730419HAM00, 15730420HAM00). It is not known whether van Horsten ever sailed there; the duke was granted permission in 1575 to send a ship to northern Iceland, though it was not allowed to trade in Skagafjörður, Eyjafjörður, or Húsavík (*KB* 1571–1575, 580).

240 *KB* 1576–1579, 13; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 46.

241 *KB* 1580–1583, 44–45; Ketilsson, *Kongelige Allernaadigste Forordninger*, 98–99; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 59; cf. Gunnarsson, *Monopoly Trade*, 54.

242 Evidently they had been sailing to Skagafjörður before, because Marcus Hess complained in 1573 that Hamburg and Bremen merchants were active in the three northern harbours where he was trading. *KB* 1571–1575, 248.

243 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): requests, July and August 1595 (15950703HAM00, 15950703HAM01, 15950822HAM00).

On the western shore of the bay Eyjafjörður is Gásir, the largest known medieval trading site in northern Iceland. The still-extant ruins, the subject of extensive scholarly investigation, consist of many booths along the beach and a church. It was used as a trading site mainly by Norwegian merchants, and lost importance when the area silted up. Ceramic finds of northern German provenance suggest that the site was used into the fifteenth century.[244] Later the trading site moved to Oddeyri/Akureyri, which was better for larger ships and had a reasonably secure harbour.[245] Eyjafjörður and Húsavík, and to a lesser extent Hofsós, were the chief harbours for the export of sulphur from the mines around Mývatn. This trade from Eyjafjörður began quite early, as is attested by archaeological finds in Gásir.[246]

The riches of sulphur attracted merchants from various countries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including Hamburgers. In 1532, Hamburg merchants complained that four years before, the Englishman John Willer had attacked and sunken the ship of Hinrick van Ronne in Eyjafjörður and killed 36 people on board, including Van Ronne.[247] That same year and again four years later, Hamburg merchants wrote to the bishop of Hólar asking that they be protected from Dutch merchants in Húsavík and Eyjafjörður.[248] As in southwestern Iceland, the Hamburg merchants came to dominate the trade, and in the donation register of the confraternity there are many years in which sulphur was donated from a pair of ships who sailed north, probably to Eyjafjörður and Húsavík. Ships from Lübeck are mentioned to have picked up sulphur in these harbours as well.[249] In 1552, we find both the ship of Hans Buneke from Hamburg and the ship of Claus Rode from Lübeck in Eyjafjörður, and the ship of Otto Bade from Hamburg in Húsavík (Table 5.1).

The year 1561 brought an unwelcome change, as King Frederick II closed the sulphur trade to non-Danish foreigners.[250] Rasmus Pedersen continued the sulphur trade on behalf of the Danish king after Marcus Hess' licence expired in 1577. The royal ships continued to sail to the sulphur harbours until 1598, when a licence for Eyjafjörður was granted to seven merchants from Copenhagen for four years.[251] Curiously, Andreas Selman from Hamburg was given a licence for

244 Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 389–391.
245 Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 167.
246 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 45; Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 197–199.
247 *DI* 16:294 (15320000HAM00). The appearance of Willer in Básendar in 1532 sparked the violent events between the Germans and English that summer. See Section 6.2.3 (Básendar).
248 *DI* 9:529; 16:341 (15360525HAM00); Thomas, *Onze IJslandsvaarders*, 11.
249 Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 196.
250 See Section 3.5.3.
251 *KB* 1596–1602, 267–268; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 46.

Eyjafjörður only two years later. According to an overview of licences from around 1601, the Copenhagen citizens had given up their licence.[252] This might have to do with overexploitation of the Mývatn mines towards the end of the sixteenth century.[253] Together with the opening of sulphur mines on the European continent, about which Stefan Loitz had complained back in the 1560s,[254] at this point the profit to be made from the Icelandic sulphur trade must have declined steeply. It is significant that in Danish times, Eyjafjörður and Húsavík were known as slaughter harbours and provided reasonable amounts of fish, indicating that their importance as sulphur harbours had diminished.[255]

6.5.4 Húsavík

Names in the sources: Husawick; Husevig; Husewick; Huswigk

As sketched above, Húsavík was a leading harbour for the export of Icelandic sulphur. It was a dangerous harbour,[256] and possibly for that reason it was closely associated with Eyjafjörður, which was more secure, although a bit further removed from the sulphur mines at Mývatn (Figure 6.13). That Húsavík was considered part of Eyjafjörður becomes clear in 1600, when Michael Barchstede from Oldesloe, who had traded in England before, requested a licence for Húsavík and "Schlete" (Melrakkaslétta in the very northeast of Iceland, which had been a harbour in earlier centuries).[257] Barchstede's request was declined because these places belonged to Eyjafjörður, for which Hamburg merchants already had a licence.[258]

252 "Dieße haffe haben vor dießer zeit ettliche burger von Copenhagen besegelt, aber hernach selbst abgestanden und nicht lenger besegelen wollen". RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00).

253 Mehler, "Sulphur Trade", 197.

254 RAK D11, Pakke 30 (Suppl. II, 35): complaints of Stefan Loitz, 1564 (15640811KOB00, 15641203STE00, 15641204STE00). See also Section 3.5.3.

255 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 314–315.

256 Aðils, 315.

257 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1882, 2:188–189.

258 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 11): request, 2 January 1600, with rejection on the back (16000102OLD00).

6.5.5 Þórshöfn

Names in the sources:

Þórshöfn: Dureshave; Dureßhaffe; Thoreshafen; Thorshøffnn; Thorshöfn; Toureshavenn; Tourishafenn; Tureshave; Turshaf

Raufarhöfn: Rodershave; Rödereshaven

In the very northeast of Iceland, between Melrakkaslétta and the narrrow headland Langanes, lies the fjord Þistilfjörður with the harbour Þórshöfn on its southern coast and the harbour Raufarhöfn on its northwestern coast (Figure 6.13). The area is known from licences to Hamburg merchants as "Dureshave" or "Rödershaven" in/or "Langenes" from 1588 onwards. Located reasonably close to Húsavík and Eyjafjörður, the trade here was probably an attempt to tap into the resources of these northern harbours, which were still off-limits to German merchants in 1588. This strategy undoubtedly had the support of the local population, who had to travel a very long and difficult way to Húsavík or Vopnafjörður. The Danes did not carry on the trade in Þórshöfn.[259]

A licence for Þórshöfn was requested in November 1587 by Hamburg merchant Joachim Warneke, on the grounds that the harbour had become available recently.[260] It is not known who was trading there before, nor if the licence was granted to Warneke. He is indicated in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne as having sailed there with a small ship (with seven to eight people), but he is also attested in earlier years as a partner of Joachim Focke, who held a licence for "Ostfriedenes" (Hornafjörður) at the time, so he might also have sailed to another harbour. In any case, the request for a licence for Þórshöfn by Cordt Basse, Hans Hering, and Hans Schomaker in 1589 does not mention Warneke.[261] The licence was granted for three years; since the three licence holders cannot be identified in the donation register in those years, they probably contracted someone else to sail on their account.[262]

In 1592, Cilie, the wife of Paul Lindeman, who had had a licence for Vopnafjörður, asked that the licence be renewed and combined with the licence for Þórshöfn, which her son Hans Lindeman would share with Basse, Hering, and Schomaker. The reason was that Paul Lindeman had had trouble in two consecutive years with Scottish pirates, and moreover had not been able to sell all his goods because of the small size of the trading district. Cilie claimed that instead of sailing to each harbour with a small ship, they would combine forces and sail

259 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 316.

260 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 9 November 1587 (15871109HAM00).

261 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): 12 May 1589 (15890512HAM01, 15890512HAM02).

262 See Section 7.2.4.

with a bigger ship, so that they could better defend themselves against pirates and the trade would be more viable.[263] Instead of being granted a combined licence, as they had asked, however, they received separate licences for Þórshöfn and Vopnafjörður, which continued to be the case from this point onwards.

The result of this was that ships sailed to Vopnafjörður while Þórshöfn was largely ignored. In the winter of 1594/5, Hinrich Moller therefore tried to acquire a licence for Þórshöfn with the help of four Icelandic priests from the region, who claimed that merchant Jacob Winock had promised to come to trade but had never showed up.[264] Hinrich Moller is attested on the same ship as Winock in 1594, which suggests that the latter was the merchant trading in Vopnafjörður. He is also recorded as holding the licence for Vopnafjörður together with Cordt Basse and Hans Hering in November 1594. The next year, Joachim Focke tried to acquire a licence for Þórshöfn, with the help of sheriff Vigfús Þorsteinnsson, who claimed that the inhabitants of Þingeyrarþing had to travel too far to the Danes in Eyjafjörður.[265] This time a licence for Langanes was granted to Focke for three years, who held a licence for "Ostfriedenes" at the same time. Curiously, though, the licence for Basse and Hering was extended for three years as well in 1598, and the last time in 1600.

6.6 Eastfjords

South of Langanes begins the region Austfirðir (Eastfjords), where trading seems to have been least attractive for German merchants, and very little mention is made of it in the donation register of St Anne's confraternity. Paradoxically, there are a great many sources pertaining to the region, as disputes between merchants about the right to use certain harbours in the late sixteenth century were frequent. This stemmed in large part from vagueness about the names of licensed harbours, which also makes it difficult to reconstruct the trading history of this area. Based on the information from the donation register of the Hamburg confraternity, the region was visited by a few small ships from Hamburg, who sometimes worked together and sometimes not. However, Bremen merchants had been in the region the longest.

263 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): requests of 18 and 26 February and 10 March 1592 (15920218HAM00, 15920226HAM00, 15920310HAM00).

264 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9): testimonies from Icelanders, 1594 (15940800VOP00, 15940826VOP00, 15940901HOF00); Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): request, February 1595 (15950219HAM00, 15950215HAM00).

265 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9): complaint of Vigfús Þorsteinsson, 1595 (15950730HAG00).

The eastern district of Múlasýsla was divided into three parts, each with its own harbour and trading district in Danish times: Vopnafjörður, Reyðarfjörður, and Berufjörður.[266] However, when the region was visited from *c.* 1500 by Bremen merchants, it was only referred to broadly as "Ostforde"; this name did not denote a specific harbour.[267] The division of harbours that is known from Danish times seems to have crystallised during the struggles in this region between German merchants from different cities during the second half of the sixteenth century.

6.6.1 Vopnafjörður

Name in the sources: Wapenforde; Wapenfoirt; Wapenfoyrtt; Wapenfurdt; Wapenfürth; Wapenvohrde; Wapfenfiortt; Wepenforde; Wognneffiord; Wopnefiorde

Vopnafjörður, the northernmost of the eastern harbours (Figure 6.1), was the first to become more specifically defined when Herman Oldenseel from Lübeck received a licence for it in February 1566. The text of the licence clearly distinguishes this harbour from "Ostforde", which was in use by Bremen merchants. This did not stop Bremen merchants from coming to Vopnafjörður: Oldenseel complained that Bernd Losekanne, Christoffer Meyer, and Dirick Vasmer visited the harbour in 1567.[268]

Herman Oldenseel was not the first to sail here, however. During the dispute between Hamburg and Bremen merchants in Berufjörður in 1580, Matthias Eggers stated that Hamburg merchants had traded in "Ostforde" for over 40 years, and listed them in chronological order: Hans Hartich, Hans Tinsdal, Roleff Hummelsen, Bernd Salefeld, and himself.[269] The Bremen merchants replied that the Hamburg merchants had actually been trading in Vopnafjörður.[270] Before 1566 and after 1568, these Hamburg merchants can indeed be traced in the donation register. In February 1576, Copenhagen burgomaster Marcus Hess was granted a licence for Vopnafjörður together with Hafnarfjörður for three years,[271] but afterwards Hamburg merchants were active there again.

In 1586, Cordt Botker and Paul Lindeman acquired a licence for Vopnafjörður, though both had been active there since approximately 1580, after Matthias Eggers moved his business to Hofsós. Apparently they had held a licence for

266 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 316–317.
267 See Section 6.6.3 (Berufjörður).
268 *DI* 14:419 (15670310KOB00).
269 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: defence of Matthias Eggers, 25 January 1580 (15800125HAM00).
270 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: response of Bremen merchants, 15 February 1580 (15800215BRE00).
271 *KB* 1576–1579, 15–16.

Vopnafjörður before 1586 as well, because in 1583 Paul Lindeman's ship was confiscated when he traded in a harbour for which he was not licensed.[272] The fact that Botker and Lindeman asked for two separate licences in 1586 indicates that both were often sailing around the region with their own ships.[273] This is reflected in the donation register of St Anne: they are sometimes on the same ship, and other times on different ships, not infrequently in cooperation with Joachim Warneke or Joachim Focke, who are also mentioned in the 1580s as interfering with the trade of Bremen merchants in Berufjörður.[274]

Paul Lindeman's activity in Vopnafjörður can be tracked until 1589, when he is last mentioned in the donation register. Due to pirate attacks and a storm, he was unable to visit Vopnafjörður for two years, during which time Hinrich Moller went there instead, eventually requesting a licence in his own name in 1592.[275] At the request of Lindeman's wife Cilie, the new licence that was issued included Þórshöfn, as has been sketched above. The licence was initially held jointly with Paul Lindeman's son Hans, and from 1594 onwards with Jacob Winock. The latter, however, was not active for a long time as well, and in 1595 and 1598–1601, ships to Vopnafjörður are mentioned in the donation register, usually with skipper Johan Tinsdal and merchants Joachim Focke, Marten Horneman, or Herman Gansberch. Winock was made sheriff in eastern Iceland[276] and Cordt Basse died, so that Herman Gansberch, Hans Hering, and Claus Olde applied for the last licence in 1600.[277] An overview of licences compiled one year later, however, mentions that a prolongation was given to Lübeck merchant Luder Ottersen in December 1600, which hints at the possibility that the Hamburg merchants were acting on his behalf in Vopnafjörður, from as well as before that year.[278]

272 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3: letter of Frederick II, 11 January 1584 (15840111HAV00). The harbour is not mentioned, but was probably Berufjörður.

273 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 318, mentions that Hamburg merchants used to visit Borgarfjörður, south of Vopnafjörður, with a small ship once or twice a year. Travelling around the Eastfjords is also attested for Bremen merchants in Berufjörður (see Section 6.6.3), so that this must have been the common way of conducting trade in the region. This would also explain why most of the ships in the confraternity of St Anne's donation register that can be traced to the Eastfjords list only seven to twelve men on board.

274 See Section 6.6.3 (Berufjörður).

275 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): February 1592 (15920223HAM00, 15920226HAM01).

276 See Section 4.4.1.1.

277 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl, II, 19): 24 October 1600 (16001024HAM00).

278 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00).

6.6.2 Reyðarfjörður

Name in the sources: Roderforde; Rodevorde

Reyðarfjörður is the largest fjord in eastern Iceland and was used as the harbour of the central district of Múlasýsla in Danish times. It was also visited irregularly by German merchants in the Eastfjords. Bremen skipper Bernd Losekanne, who fell out with his companions in Berufjörður in 1576, mentioned that he had been to Reyðarfjörður the year before, and if his fellow traders did not allow him to do business in Berufjörður, they would themselves not be welcome in Reyðarfjörður.[279] The Hamburg donation register mentions Reyðarfjörður now and then after 1610, which indicates that merchants from that city sailed there for Danish merchants. Finally, Reyðarfjörður might be the place referred to as "Ostfriedenes sonst Hoddenforde", for which Joachim Focke from Hamburg was licensed between 1586 and 1596. In 1599, in a request for prolongation of the licence, the harbour was called "Oestfriedeneß sonst Rodeforde".[280] As Joachim Focke often worked in concert with the Hamburg merchants in nearby Vopnafjörður and Þórshöfn, this is not impossible. However, the names Ostfriedenes and Hoddenforde have no Icelandic analogy in the region around Reyðarfjörður, and a localisation of this harbour in Hornafjörður is more likely (see Section 6.6.4).

6.6.3 Berufjörður

Names in the sources: Berenfordt; Bernfoyrt; Bredeforde; Ostforde; Oestfiordtt; Oßfortt; Ostenforth; Papie; Pappø; Østfiord

Berufjörður was the most important harbour in eastern Iceland, and among the most heavily contested harbours of the entire island. It is the only harbour not in western Iceland in the list of harbours offered to Hamburg in 1565 that requires at least 20 twenty lasts of flour annually (Table 5.2). It was also one of the oldest harbours; on the fjord's northern coast, a trading site known as Gautavík is mentioned many times in the annals from *c*. 1250 onwards. The ruins of the site have been thoroughly researched. An excavation led by German archaeologist Torsten Capelle in 1979 revealed four complexes of buildings, which largely consisted of small booths. In the western complex, a round

279 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: final plea of Bernd Losekanne, 1576 (15760200BRE00).

280 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): 3 February 1599 (15990203HAM00). The name "Rodeforde" could very well be a mistake by the scribe of the city of Hamburg; it does not occur anywhere else in relation to "Ostfriedenes".

brick structure was found, which has been interpreted as a drying kiln or a storage facility for sulphur or train oil. Many ceramic fragments, mostly from the sixteenth century, are evidence of import from northern Germany.[281] Recent analysis of 13 redware fragments showed that 12 were produced near Bremen and the remaining one was produced in the Netherlands, which accords with documentary evidence about the dominance of Bremen merchants in the area in the sixteenth century.[282] Gautavík was abandoned in the later sixteenth century due to silting of the harbour, and a new trading site was established at Djúpivogur at the southern entrance of the fjord (Figure 6.14).[283]

Shortly before 1500 Bremen merchants must have started trading in this region under the name of "Ostforde",[284] which broadly referred to the entire eastern quarter of the island, although they probably concentrated their trading in Gautavík. In 1582, Bremen merchants made the claim that they had been and still were active across the entire region together with Hornafjörður, first with one ship and eventually with two ships annually,[285] and in 1567 the region was defined as stretching from Hornafjörður to Vopnafjörður.[286] The vast extent of the trading area and its unclear definition provided the ground for the many conflicts after the introduction of licences, when harbours became more clearly delineated. Later, by way of referring specifically to the harbour, it was also called "Papie", after the island Papey before the coast of Berufjörður, which one had to pass to enter the fjord, as a document from 1591 indicates.[287]

281 Mehler et al., "Gautavík", 227–231; Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 391–392; Þorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser", 170.

282 Mehler et al., 236.

283 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 318; Gardiner and Mehler, "Trading and Fishing Sites", 392.

284 Documents from the late sixteenth century mention Bremen merchants having been active there for a long time, which all point back to shortly before 1500. On 28 February 1567, they claimed to having traded there for over 70 years (15670228BRE00); on 13 February 1576 for 80 years (15760213BRE00); and on 15 February 1580 for 80 years (15800215BRE00). RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15).

285 "wir die have Oistfortt sambt dessenn sussell, unnd dabey gelegene Hornefortt, eine vast geraume unnd lange zeitt von jharenn hero, anfenglich mit einem, hernacher aber alle wege mit zweyen unsern schiffenn [. . .] besiegeldt". RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): complaint against Hamburg merchants, 18 January 1580 (15820118BRE00).

286 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Tyleman Zerneman, 26 September 1567 (15670926BRE00).

287 "diese havinge Oistfiortt auch Papie genandt wirde nun sey aber Papie einn eilandt so bey der Oistfiortt so nahentt liege, das mann dabey hinein ann die have siegelenn muß, unnd dahero umb mehrer gewißheitt willen dieser havinge dieselbige von solchem eilande auch Papie genantt wordenn". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Daniel Bisterfeld, 14 November 1591 (15911114BRE00).

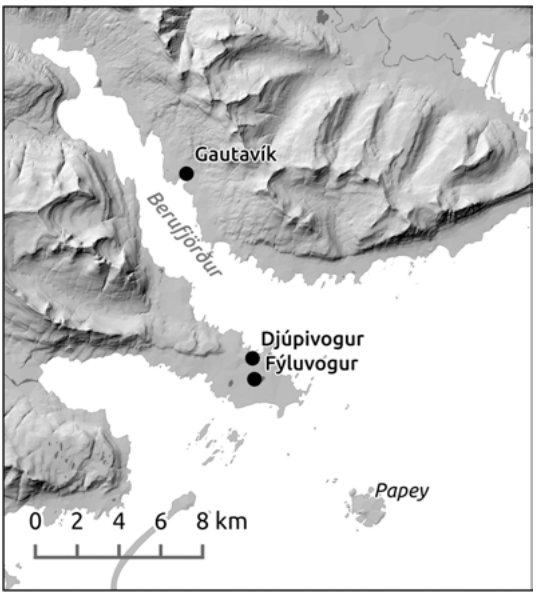

Figure 6.14: Map of locations in and around Berufjörður in eastern Iceland. See Figure 6.1 for location.

At the same time as Herman Oldenseel received his licence for Vopnafjörður in 1566, "Ostforde" was given to Copenhagen merchant Heinrich Mumme. Bremen merchants, however, did not accept this situation and continued to trade in the region, as complaints from Mumme and Oldenseel indicate.[288] Bremen merchants seem to have had the support of sheriff Eiríkur Árnason, who set the trade with them as per usual in 1567, but complained about the behaviour of the new merchants in Vopnafjörður.[289] Diplomatic efforts by the Bremen authorities bore fruit in 1569, when Bernd Losekanne received a licence for "Ostforde", although it was decided that Mumme would be allowed to sail there as well until 1570.[290]

In 1572, Losekanne formed a *maschup* with fourteen others, eight of whom stayed at home. As skipper, Losekanne had the sole right of expelling others from the *maschup* if they misbehaved on board.[291] The company was a

288 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): complaint from Mumme, 1567 (15670201FRE00); SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint from Oldenseel, 1567 (15670310KOB00); complaint from Mumme, 1568 (15680304KOB00, 15680304KOB01).
289 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): testimony of Eiríkur, 21 August 1567 (15670821SKR00).
290 DI 15:170 (15690402KOB00).
291 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: *Maschup* contract, 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00).

continuation of the *maschup* formed in 1549 that had sailed in the period before 1566. The contract lists Losekanne among ten merchants sailing from Bremen to Iceland, this time under the command of skipper Herman Wedeman.[292] Many of the other names appear in both contracts as well.[293]

We would not have known about the exact composition of these trading companies, had not a dispute broken out between Losekanne and the others in 1574. Bernd Losekanne stated that three merchants had mutinied against him in Iceland, whom he decided to expel from the *maschup*. Back in Bremen, however, the other merchants in the *maschup*, led by Christoffer Meyer, turned against him and tried to keep the company together. Losekanne thereupon decided to leave the *maschup* himself and start a new one, equip a ship, hire a crew, and trade on his own account the next year.[294] This presented the others with a problem, as the licence for the harbour had been issued in Losekanne's name. Moreover, Losekanne had torn the licence to pieces and removed the seal, claiming that the Danish king had given up the licence trade and it was therefore of no use anymore.[295] Suspecting difficulties in Iceland without a valid licence, Meyer claimed that the licence was valid for the entire company due to their long history of trading together. Bremen's city council decided in favour of Meyer and declared that Losekanne was free to take part in the former *maschup*, but if he decided not to, he should not interfere with the others' business.[296]

However, Losekanne did not accept the verdict and sailed north anyway. In the spring of 1576, Meyer complained that when they had gone to Berufjörður the previous year, a boat with Losekanne's men was there, whereas Losekanne himself had gone to Reyðarfjörður. Losekanne claimed that his men were subsequently attacked by Meyer's men "with guns, daggers, and fire, like raging wolves", although Meyer claimed that his men had only gotten a little impatient.[297] Apparently Meyer won the case, as the licence was re-issued in his name in May 1577. Losekanne seems to have continued sailing to the same harbour as well, maybe with his own ship (which could have been when two ships

292 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: *Maschup* contract, 8 April 1549 (15490408BRE00).

293 See Section 7.2.1.

294 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: final plea of Bernd Losekanne, 1576 (15760200BRE00). See Section 7.2.3.

295 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: declaration of Bremen's secretary, 7 April 1575 (15750407BRE00).

296 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: verdict of the city council, March 1575 (15750325BRE00, 15750328BRE00).

297 "mit buchsen, spießen, brennenden lunten, gleich wie rasende wolffe". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: defense of Losekanne, 6 February 1576 (15760206BRE00); reply of Meyer, 13 February (15760213BRE00).

began to sail there), or possibly he reconciled with his former *maschup*. In January 1580, Losekanne and Meyer jointly complained about the interference from Matthias Eggers and Simon Schmidt from Hamburg in "Ostforde" over the previous three years.[298]

This complaint marked the beginning of two decades of struggle between Hamburg and Bremen merchants over the right to trade in Berufjörður. The men from Hamburg claimed to have traded in the region for 40 years, but Losekanne and Meyer replied that they had done so in Vopnafjörður, and had been in Berufjörður only a few times. Once, Hans Hartich even stationed a merchant in nearby "Torniß" (possibly Torfnes in Reyðarfjörður), but when he did not return, Losekanne and Meyer had to take the merchant back to Bremen.[299] Shortly afterwards, Matthias Eggers seems to have begun to trade in Skagafjörður, but this was not the end of Hamburg presence in the area. Losekanne and Meyer complained again in 1582 and 1583, this time about Joachim Focke and Joachim Warneke, after which governor Johan Bockholt proposed that the matter be discussed at the next Althing.[300]

The support of sheriff Eiríkur Árnason for the presence of Hamburg merchants in Berufjörður was crucial. Eggers and his companions defended their trading in the harbour by arguing that they had a general licence from the Danish king for Iceland. Losekanne and Meyer responded that Eiríkur Árnason had sold them this licence, in return for money and a share of the ship, and that it had been issued in Eiríkur's name, and not in that of the Hamburg merchants.[301] Eiríkur had traded with Hamburg merchants before, as he claimed to have stored *wadmal* in the booth in the harbour in 1575 that was destined for a man from Hamburg named Matthies (i.e. Eggers).[302] Eiríkur moved to Hamburg later, and appears in the donation register of the confraternity in 1583 and 1584.[303]

A few relatively peaceful years followed the renewal of the licence in 1586 for a Bremen merchant, this time Marten Losekanne (probably Bernd's son) for four years. In 1589, however, the conflict flared up again. Hamburg merchant Daniel Elers had been granted a licence for the harbour "Bereforde", which was the name that the Icelanders used for the fjord (Berufjörður). The situation was

298 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 23 January 1580 (15800123BRE00).

299 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: defense of Eggers, 25 January 1580 (15800125HAM00); reply of Losekanne and Meyer, 15 February (15800215BRE00).

300 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): correspondence 1582–1583.

301 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: letter from Eggers, 27 February 1580 (15800227HAM00); answer from Bremen, 8 March (15800308BRE00).

302 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: statement of Eiríkur Árnason, 6 August 1575 (15750806SKR00).

303 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 150–151. See also Section 4.3.6.

further complicated when the German Chancery in Copenhagen apparently made an error in the renewal of Losekanne's licence for "Ostforde", issuing him one for Vopnafjörður instead; Elers later used this to underscore that his was the legitimate licence, claiming that Losekanne had changed the harbour on his from Vopnafjörður to "Ostforde" on purpose.[304] The next summer, Bremen merchants collected testimonies of the inhabitants of Berufjörður and surroundings, in which they stated that Bremen merchants had always served them well for over 80 years.[305] Bremen secretary Daniel Bisterfeld was sent to the king in autumn of 1590 to present these testimonies and discuss the case, which is the first time that we hear that the Bremen merchants had trading booths in "Fuluwick", probably the bay Fýluvogur, which was not more than a kilometre south of Djúpivogur, the trading site that Hamburg merchants used (Figure 6.14).[306] Thereupon Marten Losekanne's licence was renewed, but a few months later the king rescinded Losekanne's right to trade in Berufjörður after a visit from Daniel Elers.[307] In the summer of 1591, both Hamburg and Bremen merchants collected testimonies from Icelanders, which either confirmed or denied the existence of a harbour called "Ostforde" and a trading site called "Fuluwick".[308] Once again, Daniel Bisterfeld was sent to the Danish court, but nothing changed.[309] The Danish administration decided that it was impossible to decide which party was right, and confirmed the status quo.[310]

From now on, licences for Hamburg merchants were issued as "Bereforde" with the main trading site "Dupwage" (Djúpivogur), and those for Bremen merchants as "Ostforde in Ostfortsussel" with the main trading site "Fuluwick". Of the Bremen merchants, Marten Losekanne remained active, from 1595 onwards jointly with Johan Oldenbuttel and Johan Reineke's widow, and from 1598 with

304 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): letter of Daniel Elers, 1591 (15910000HAM00).

305 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16, 18a) (15900526FUL00, 15900000OST00, 15900812FUL00, 15900813FUL00, 15900820FUL00, 15900827FUL00, 15900829FUL00).

306 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: instruction for Bisterfeld, 14 October 1590 (15901014BRE01). Bisterfeld also requested a licence for "Klevesohe in Lon" on behalf of Friedrich Tilebare. This was probably the lagoon Lón south of Berufjörður (Figure 6.1), where the River Jökulsá came down from the gletsjer Vatnajökull, which was also known as Klofajökull, hence the name "Klevesohe". Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1882, 2:268. There are no other references to trade in Lón, so the licence was probably never used, if it was ever granted in the first place.

307 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): letter of Christian IV, 7 May 1591 (15910507KOB00).

308 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15910700BER00, 15910000ISL00, 15910825GET00, 15910821EYO00, 15910824FUL00, 15910819SLE00, 15910826FUL00, 15910821VIK00, 15910811BER00).

309 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): instruction, 14 November (15911114BRE00).

310 *KB* 1588–1592, 739; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 56–57.

Friederich Tilebare as well. As for the Hamburg merchants, Daniel Elers remained the licence holder, but he is never attested in the donation register of the confraternity. Instead, Joachim Focke or Joachim Warneke must have traded in Berufjörður for him. After his death, the licence was granted in 1598 to Jacob Fincke from Flensburg for three years.

6.6.4 Hornafjörður

Names in the sources: Ostfriedenes sonst Hoddenforde; Ostfriederneshaffe; Harneforth; Hornefiordt

One of the most puzzling place names in Iceland is "Ostfriedenes sonst Hoddenforde", which was licensed to Joachim Focke from Hamburg from 1586 onwards. This might be a corruption of "Oddenforde", which was sometimes used for Eyjafjörður, although this is unlikely, due to the Danish presence in Eyjafjörður; a more likely option is Hornafjörður (Figure 6.1).[311] Due to the Icelandic pronunciation of the letter combination *rn* sounding more like *dn*, a corruption from Hornafjörður to "Hoddenforde" is not unlikely. Moreover, Hornafjörður is often mentioned in combination with "Ostforde", and the site is known to have been used by German merchants, with the ruins of booths still being somewhat visible in the nineteenth century.[312] Joachim Focke is known to have been active in eastern Iceland, due to the frequent alliances with merchants in Vopnafjörður or Þórshöfn mentioned in the donation register of the Hamburg confraternity. More difficult to interpret, however, is the addition "Ostfriedenes", which might refer to Austurfjörutangi, the strip of land that closed off the lagoon Hornafjörður to the east, and which had to be passed to enter the harbour, which is located in a bay accessible from the eastern side of the headland (*nes*) in the middle of the lagoon.[313]

Hornafjörður is mentioned in annals as a landing place for English merchants on their way to western Iceland in 1413,[314] and also seems to have been frequented by Bremen merchants from early on. During the dispute with his companions in 1576, Bernd Losekanne stated that his brother Johan had first sailed to "Ostforde", whereas he himself had first traded in "Horneforde" with Herman Wedeman, before they had moved on to "Ostforde" and founded the *maschup* in 1549.[315] In subsequent years the place continued to be used by

311 A third unlikely candidate is Reyðarfjörður; see Section 6.6.2.
312 Kålund, *Beskrivelse af Island*, 1882, 2:271.
313 Kålund, 2:271.
314 Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 184–185.
315 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: final plea of Losekanne, 1576 (15760200BRE00).

Bremen merchants from Berufjörður, and in 1582 and 1583 the region was still being referred to as "Ost- und Horneforde".[316] The acquisition of the licence for this fjord under the alternative name "Ostfriedenes sonst Hoddenforde" in 1586 might therefore be considered a trick to gain access to this fjord by deceiving the German Chancery. It might also be the reason why there is little evidence for Hamburg-Bremen conflict in the region between 1586 and 1589. Curiously, however, there is no evidence for Bremen attempts to prevent Focke from using his licence. The licence was renewed every two to three years until 1596, when Focke also received a licence for Langanes. When he tried to return to Hornafjörður, Jacob Winock, who had become sheriff of Múlasýsla in the meantime, noticed that this was the "Ost- und Horneforde" for which Friedrich Tilebare from Bremen already had a licence, and enquired for details at the German Chancery.[317] It is unlikely that a new licence was ever granted.

316 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: letter from Bremen, 24 March 1582 (15820324BRE00); letter from governor Johan Bockholt, February 1583 (15830200KLI00).

317 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): 24 August 1599 (15990824SKR00). See Section 4.4.1.1.

Part III: **The situation in Germany**

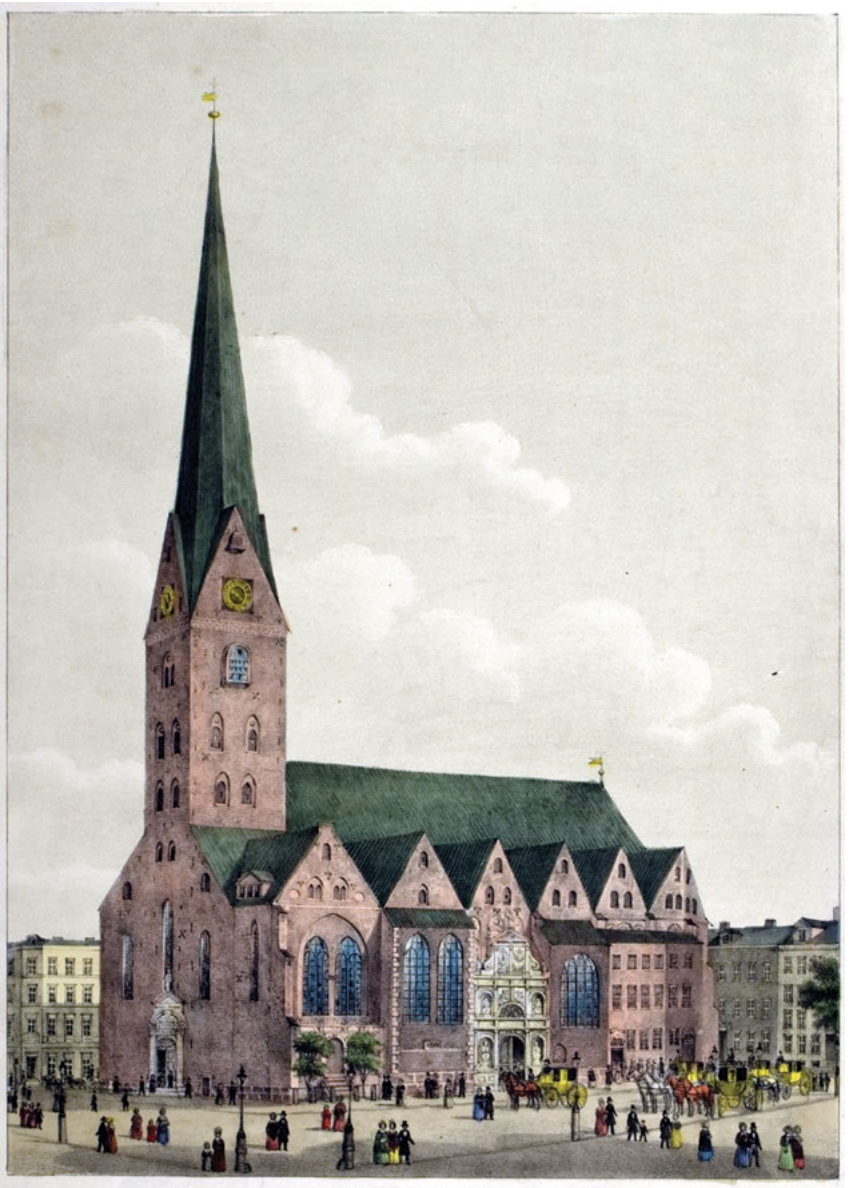

Figure 6.15: St Peter's Church in Hamburg before the great fire of 1842, engraving by Peter Suhr. The chapel of St Anne, the second side chapel from the left, was owned by the confraternity of Iceland merchants from 1513 to 1535. The church was reconstructed in the same style after the fire, but without the side chapels. Image courtesy of the Stiftung Historische Museen Hamburg, Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte.

7 The organisation of the North Atlantic trade

7.1 Institutions in the North Atlantic trade: Societies and confraternities

Discussion of the organisation of the North Atlantic trade in the northern German cities in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries should start with an assessment of the merchant societies (*Fahrergesellschaften*) and confraternities active in the (informal) organisation of the trade. The Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants in Hamburg (*Islandfahrerbroderschop*) in particular has received a great deal of attention in the historiography of the North Atlantic trade, and its records are central sources for the study of this trade.[1] However, the study of the confraternity, which is deemed unique to Hamburg, is met with much confusion, which is related to the general nature of these kinds of institutions.

Confraternities (*broderschoppen*) were in the first place religious corporations, a common phenomenon in late medieval Europe. In Hamburg there were about 100 of them; most religious houses (monasteries and churches) hosted ten or more.[2] These confraternities all had similar goals, first and foremost the celebration of masses and the remembrance of dead members of the confraternity (*memoria*), as well as the organisation of their funerals. Next to this, almost all confraternities were occupied with charity by supporting the poor, giving alms on regular days, and supporting hospitals.[3] Members of specific occupations, notably seafarers, often founded confraternities, especially in northern

1 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 113–119; Hofmeister, "Hansische Kaufleute", 35; Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 180–183; Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 1–40.

2 Gertrud Brandes, "Die geistlichen Brüderschaften in Hamburg während des Mittelalters", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 34 (1934): 80.

3 Jürgen Sarnowsky, "Frömmigkeit und Kirche im spätmittelalterlichen Hamburg", in *Hanse und Stadt. Akteure, Strukturen und Entwicklungen im regionalen und europäischen Raum. Festschrift für Rolf Hammel-Kiesow zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael Hundt and Jan Lokers (Lübeck, 2014), 327–329; Thomas Brück, "Zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung von Kooperationen der Schiffer und Bootsleute vom ausgehenden 15. bis zum beginnenden 17. Jh.", in *Beiträge zur hansischen Kultur-, Verfassungs- und Schiffahrtsgeschichte*, ed. Horst Wernicke and Nils Jörn, Hansische Studien 10 (Weimar, 1998), 184–185; see also generally Monika Escher-Apsner, "Mittelalterliche Bruderschaften in europäischen Städten. Funktionen, Formen, Akteure / Medieval confraternities in European towns. Functions, forms, protagonists. Eine Einleitung / An introduction", in *Mittelalterliche Bruderschaften in europäischen Städten. Funktionen, Formen, Akteure / Medieval Confraternities in European Towns. Functions, Forms, Protagonists, Inklusion/Exklusion*. Studien zu Fremdheit und Armut von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart 12 (Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 9–28.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-007

Germany.[4] Hamburg merchants are also known to have founded confraternities abroad, such as in Amsterdam, where they had an altar in the Oude Kerk.[5]

In addition to tending to the needs of deceased members and the poor, confraternities for seafarers and/or merchants were also instrumental as social institutions for merchants. They played a role in the informal organisation of the trade, for example in building networks, sharing information among the members, and the maintenance of a good reputation for individual merchants.[6] In this regard the confraternities thus had much in common with the merchants' societies (*geselschoppen*), i.e. associations of men with common business interests (e.g. trade in a specific region). These were common in northern Germany in the medieval period as well. In Hamburg, three of these *Fahrergesellschaften* are known to have been in existence by the fourteenth century at the latest: one of the merchants trading with England (*Englandfahrer*), one of the merchants trading with Scania (*Schonenfahrer*), and one of the merchants trading with Flanders (*Flandernfahrer*). From the ranks of the Scania merchants a society of Bergen merchants (*Bergenfahrer*) was founded around 1535. The members of these societies usually met once a year for a grand feast with a banquet, which took place in the society's building.[7]

Friederike Koch and others have noted that the distinction between a society and a confraternity has not always been noticed by historians, and that the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants was therefore often treated as one of the *Fahrergesellschaften*.[8] Interestingly, the text of the foundation

4 Brück, "Kooperationen der Schiffer"; Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 168.

5 Christian Ashauer, "Das Rechnungsbuch der 'Hamburger Bruderschaft' in Amsterdam", in *Hamburger Lebenswelten im Spätmittelalter. Untersuchungen an gedruckten und ungedruckten Quellen*, ed. Stephan Selzer and Benjamin Weidemann, Contributiones. Mittelalterforschung an der Helmut-Schmidt-Universität 2 (Münster, 2014), 85–102.

6 Carsten Jahnke, "Zu Ehren Gottes und zum Wohl der Kasse. Religiöse und soziale Netzwerke in den spätmittelalterlichen Hansestädten und deren Funktionen", in *Raumbildung durch Netzwerke? Der Ostseeraum zwischen Wikingerzeit aus archäologischer und geschichtswissenschaftlicher Perspektive*, ed. Sunhild Kleingärtner and Gabriel Zeilinger (Bonn, 2012), 165–182; see also Kerstin Rahn, "Wirkungsfelder religiöser Bruderschaften in spätmittelalterlichen Städten der sächsischen und wendischen Hanse", in *Genossenschaftliche Strukturen in der Hanse*, ed. Nils Jörn, Detlef Kattinger, and Horst Wernicke, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte NF 48 (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1999), 165–180.

7 Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 151–152; Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 178–182.

8 E.g. Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 182–183, and Brandes, "Brüderschaften", 89–90, who do not differentiate between a society and a confraternity. See Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 9–16 for a detailed analysis of this issue; see also Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 113–114; Jürgen Bolland, "Die Gesellschaft der Flandernfahrer in Hamburg während des 15. Jahrhunderts", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 41 (1951): 156.

charter of the confraternity of Iceland merchants states that the confraternity was founded by the society of Iceland merchants, suggesting that both a confraternity and a society existed.[9] On the other hand, it is the question whether these institutions can be completely seen apart. Baasch observes that with regard to the Iceland merchants in Hamburg, the terms are often used interchangeably in the sources, so that it would be "a futile effort separating the functions of the confraternity and those of the society in detail".[10]

With this ambiguity in mind, the following section will look at the nature and function of these institutions in the city of Hamburg and their role in the North Atlantic trade. In addition, the relations between the North Atlantic merchants and the other societies or confraternities in the city will be explored. Next, the situation in Hamburg will be compared with those of the other cities active in the North Atlantic trade, especially Bremen. It will be asked whether the situation in Hamburg was indeed as unique as has often been claimed; the answer to this question hinges on the answers to the questions if comparable institutions were present in Bremen, and if not, which institutions in Bremen performed the functions that the confraternity of St Anne did for the merchants in Hamburg.

7.1.1 Hamburg

The appearance of a separate community of Iceland merchants in Hamburg was closely connected to the other merchant societies in the city, namely those of the Flanders, England, and Scania merchants. It is unclear whether these societies were actively involved in commercial enterprises, or if they functioned merely as forums for merchants with common business interests. Although it was not obligatory to become a member, the societies wielded a great deal of influence within the city in the sixteenth century. From their ranks the college of "Eldermen of the common merchants" was chosen from 1517 onwards, which enacted regulations for the freighting of ships, influenced the city's policies and actions concerning foreign commerce, and functioned as a court of arbitration in disputes between members of the societies. Moreover, they founded the first Hamburg exchange (*Börse*) in 1558.[11] In the second half of the fifteenth

9 "kopluden unde guden gezellen der gesellschup der Yßlandesfarer". SAH 710–1, W50 (15000404HAM00); see Section 7.1.1.2.

10 "Es wäre vergebliche Mühe, im Einzelnen die Function der Brüderschaft von denen der Gesellschaft zu trennen". Baasch, Islandfahrt, 114.

11 Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 152–155; Jules Eberhard Noltenius, *Über die Anfänge der Elterleute des Kaufmanns in Bremen* (Bremen, 1977), 41; Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 165; Steinbrinker,

century, the society of *Flandernfahrer* was pre-eminent, with the majority of the city's councillors and burgomasters coming from its ranks.[12] However, just a few decades later the society of *Englandfahrer* assumed the leading position among the city's societies, as about half of the councillors in the second quarter of the sixteenth century came from their ranks, and between 1567 and 1578 the percentage rose to more than 75.[13]

7.1.1.1 The community of Iceland merchants and their relation to the city's merchant societies

The society of *Englandfahrer*, comprised of those who traded with England (predominantly London), also exercised influence on the organisation of the North Atlantic trade in Hamburg. As the stockfish trade with England was of great importance for the direct German trade with Iceland in the early years, many merchants had interests in both regions.[14] This is embodied in the person of Lutke Schmidt, the Hamburg skipper who was one of the main actors in the violent acts against the English in Iceland in 1532, who is known to have been elderman of the Hanseatic Steelyard in Lynn in 1505.[15] Regrettably, we do not know much about his role in the society of England merchants or the confraternity of Iceland merchants, as the records of both associations are only available for later years.

Given these connections, it is not surprising that the first associations of merchants with Iceland (*Islandfahrer*) were formed *within* the society of *Englandfahrer*.[16] In 1528, a threefold division of contributions is made within the society: the *olde taffel*, *islandeslaghe*, and *burlage*. The name *islandeslaghe* ('Icelandic feast') suggests that the Iceland merchants had by that time formed a subgroup within the society, which according to Brandes took place

"Fahrergesellschaften", 64–84; Rainer Postel, *Versammlung Eines Ehrbaren Kaufmanns 1517–1992. Kaufmännische Selbstverwaltung in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Hamburg, 1992), 11–17.

12 Bolland, "Flandernfahrer", 167.

13 Hans-Peter Plaß, "Die Hamburger Englandfahrer 1512–1568. Ihr Handel, ihre ökonomische Bedeutung, ihr politischer Einfluß und ihr Verhältnis zur Reformation" (master's thesis, Universität Hamburg, 1974), 34.

14 See Section 4.1.2.

15 Paul Richards, "King's Lynn and the Hanseatic League", in *Hanse Und Stadt. Akteure, Strukturen Und Entwicklungen Im Regionalen Und Europäischen Raum. Festschrift Für Rolf Hammel-Kiesow Zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael Hundt and Jan Lokers (Lübeck, 2014), 109; Nils Jörn, "*With money and bloode": der Londoner Stalhof im Spannungsfeld der englisch-hansischen Beziehungen im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2000), 410n1429, observes that Schmidt was involved in an "incident" with English ships in 1532.

16 This stands in marked contrast with the Hamburg society of the *Bergenfahrer*, which evolved from the association of *Schonenfahrer*, whose members mainly traded in herring from Scania.

prior to the foundation of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants (1500).[17] This is not unlikely, as organised commercial activity from Hamburg in Iceland can be traced back to 1475.[18]

The *islandeslaghe* disappeared in 1530, which Brandes connects to the city regulations in the *Langer Rezess* (1529), article 79 of which stipulates that a citizen could only belong to one society. The society of *Englandfahrer* would have been exclusively for merchants with England from that moment on, and the Iceland merchants would be organised in their own confraternity.[19] A more plausible explanation is suggested by Klaus Friedland, who observes that the trade between Iceland and England via Hamburg, which was conducted by the same merchants in the early fifteenth century, was gradually splitting into two branches, with merchants specialising in one or the other, as described above.[20] This would have been the reason for the disappearance of the Iceland merchants from the society of England merchants.[21] I would like to add the possibility that the frequent clashes between English and German traders in Iceland in this period, which ensnared the Hanseatic merchants in London as well in 1534,[22] added to the divergence of interests between merchants in the Icelandic trade and those in the English.

Friederike Koch has tried to differentiate between the merchants organised in the *islandeslaghe* in the society of England merchants and a separate society of Iceland merchants.[23] Indeed there are some references to a separate *geselschop* of Iceland merchants, e.g. in the foundation charter of St Anne's confraternity, in the record of the acquisition of a house in the Rosenstraße in Hamburg in 1499,[24] and in a register of St Peter's church in Hamburg, where the confraternity had a chapel, which mentions in 1535 a "confraternity or society".[25] The last example, however, is ambiguous: it can either mean that both a confraternity and a society existed, or that the same organisation was known under both names. In light of

17 Brandes, "Brüderschaften", 90.

18 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 113. See also Section 3.4.3.

19 Brandes, "Brüderschaften", 90. Note that Brandes does not make a distinction between a society and a confraternity, which is problematic. Moreover, the *Langer Rezess* only mentions the Flanders, Scania, and England merchants' societies: see Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 7n14.

20 See Section 4.1.2.

21 Friedland, "Hamburger Englandfahrer", 18.

22 See Section 3.3.

23 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 6–14.

24 Koch, 9; Piper, "Armenwohnungen", 1.

25 SAH 512–2 St. Petri A II b, ff. 127–128: "Broderschupp edder gesellschop", cited by Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 10.

the unclear documentary evidence and the absence of a foundation charter, statutes or ordinances, and a building, it would be safest to assume that a separate association of Iceland merchants in Hamburg existed only informally.[26]

Moreover, the connections to the *Englandfahrer* society were never completely severed. The annual celebrations of the confraternity of St Anne, known since 1531 as the *Höge*, usually took place in the building of the *Englandfahrer* society in the Pelzerstraße, although not always. The feast was also celebrated in the house of the *Schonenfahrer* in 1548, in the *Schiffergesellschaft* in 1561, and in the houses of the eldermen Hans Hesterberch (1526) and Herman Kopman (1630).[27] A contract from 1596 mentions that "the Iceland merchants are for the larger part also the brothers of the society [of England merchants]", and celebrated their *Höge* in their building each year.[28] Indeed, more than 50 out of 206 "active" members of the confraternity can also be identified as members of the *Englandfahrer* society.[29]

26 See also Steinbrinker, "Fahrergesellschaften", 111, who links the absence of a real society of Iceland merchants in Hamburg to the absence of a settlement of Hamburg merchants in Iceland. The establishment of settlements of Hanseatic merchants (*Kontore*) in the regions where they traded had been defining moments for the development of the societies of England and Flanders merchants.

27 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 8n21; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 119.

28 "Dewile ock de Iszlandesfahrers mehrers dels der Geselschoppes broeder sin und Jahrliches in dersulvigen Geselschoppes Hues Ehren höegen tho holden plegen, so schall Ehnen ock henförder solches tho dhonde frey sin und Ehnen van dem Huerlinge freyen, ahne jennige endtgeltenisze vörstadet und thogelaten werden; Jedoch wes desulvigen Iszlandesfahrer in holdinge Ehre Höegen des Frouwen, Kinderen, Megeden und Jungen, uth freyem ungedwungenen gemöte und willen tho bhergelde edder sonsten thokeren und geven willen, solches schal Ehnen unbenhamen tho Ehrem gefallen frey stehen". SAH 612-2/2, no. 49. Transcript from Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 119n1. Baasch interprets the document wrongly as a contract by which the Iceland merchants rented the building of the England merchants (see also Steinbrinker, "Fahrergesellschaften", 116). In fact, it is a contract with Hinrich Holtgreve, who rented the premises as innkeeper for one year. The conditions of the contract specified that Holtgreve (the *Huerlinge* mentioned in the citation) had to allow the Iceland merchants to celebrate their annual feast there. Hinrich Holtgreve was not an Iceland merchant himself, although he donated money to the confraternity of St Anne (as innkeeper of the *Englandfahrer* society) in 1599 (SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 424v). However, he might have been closely related to some of them. The name Holtgreve appears many times in the donation register of the confraternity: the most notable references are to Hans Holtgreve, who appears as skipper in 1587–1602, and from 1591 as licence holder for Hafnarfjörður (see Appendices A and C). Hinrich Holtgreve must have died in 1621, as in that year the pallbearers at his funeral made a donation to the confraternity (f. 509v).

29 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 41; Harry P. Krüger, *Namensverzeichnis zu Quellen der Englandfahrergesellschaft aus der Zeit von 1541–1809*, 1983; Kurt Piper, *Verzeichnis der tätigen Mitglieder der St. Annen-Brüderschaft der Islandfahrer zu Hamburg 1500–1657*, 1986. With "tätige Mitglieder", Piper identifies the members of the confraternity who are known to have

And in 1550, a golden chalice was given to the *Englandfahrer* by the confraternity as a sign of gratitude for the hospitality the former had shown the latter.[30] The case of Johan Holtgreve further underscores the continuing close relations between the two groups of merchants. In 1602 Holtgreve was being held in the house of the brewers' society, as it was alleged he had traded illegally in Iceland. He requested to be released from custody on the payment of bail, or else to be moved to the house of the society of *Englandfahrer* so he could continue his business while waiting for a verdict.[31]

The North Atlantic merchants had connections to the other societies as well, and some became Elderman of the common merchants.[32] Although Baasch states that there is little evidence for the connection of Hamburg's North Atlantic merchants to the society of Scania merchants in the city,[33] this is not true. Of the "active" members of the confraternity of Iceland merchants, at least 29 were members of the *Schonenfahrer* society as well,[34] and it is known that the *Höge* was once celebrated in the building of the latter, as mentioned above. The society, the only medieval merchant society in Hamburg that continued to be active in commerce in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, controlled much of the city's trade with Scandinavia, mainly involving herring.[35] It is not inconceivable that with the loosening of the connections between the Iceland and England trade and the growing Danish control of the North Atlantic trade, the connections with the Scania merchants became more important for the North Atlantic merchants, at the expense of the connections with the England merchants. It would be interesting to know if any North Atlantic merchants were members of the society of Bergen merchants, but regrettably that society's records have not been preserved.

A change in the structure of the Hamburg trade with England came about with the settlement of the company of Merchant Adventurers in the city. This was an association of London merchants who monopolised the English cloth trade and received toll privileges in Hamburg, especially after their second period of settlement in the city beginning in 1611. They had been in Hamburg before, from 1567 to 1579, whereupon they moved to Emden until 1587, and then to

had a specific function in the confraternity, such as elderman, *rekensman*, or scribe. See also Section 7.1.1.2 and Appendix C.

30 SAH 612-2/5, 1 vol. 1, p. 466; Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 119.

31 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16020830HAM01).

32 SAH 612-2/1, no. 1: Eldermen Hans Hesterberch from the *Englandfahrer* (1522, p. 3) and Joachim Wichman of the *Flandernfahrer* (1578, p. 18) are both also attested in the Icelandic trade. Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 40.

33 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 118n4.

34 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 41. See Appendix C.

35 Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 163–164.

Stade, near Hamburg, until 1611.[36] Given the continued demand for Icelandic products in England and the close connections of the Hamburg Iceland merchants with the *Englandfahrer*, it is not surprising that connections with the Merchant Adventurers also existed. This is illustrated by the example of Matthias Hoep, who had been a merchant in London himself (1563–1570), had good contacts with the Merchant Adventurers, and sold most of the falcons he imported from Iceland in the 1580s and 1590s to English merchants in Hamburg.[37]

Moreover, Kathrin Zickermann has shown that the Merchant Adventurers helped facilitate the trade of Scottish merchants in northern Germany. In the seventeenth century especially, this brought the Merchant Adventurers into contact with Hamburg's Shetland merchants (who belonged to the confraternity of St Anne, and likely counted themselves members of the community of *Islandfahrer* as well). James Mowat, for example, a Scotsman listed on several Hamburg ships returning from Shetland around 1630, is attested as a member of the church of the Merchant Adventurers in Hamburg in 1631. Finally, the payment of a debt by a Bremen merchant for a transaction in Shetland via a chain of English and Scottish merchants, starting with Joshua Averie, the secretary of the Merchant Adventurers in Hamburg in 1639, has already been discussed above.[38]

7.1.1.2 The confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants

On 4 April 1500, "a confraternity named St Anne of the Iceland Merchants"[39] was founded by the vicar, prior, and subprior of the Dominican Monastery of St John[40] in Hamburg together with the merchants and servants of the *geselsschup der Islandesfarer*. The confraternity was devoted to St Anne, St Olav, and St Thorlacius, the last two being the patron saints of Norway and Iceland, respectively. It received

36 Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 21–22; Richard Ehrenberg, *Hamburg und England im Zeitalter der Königin Elisabeth* (Jena, 1896), 76–158; on the cloth trade by the Merchant Adventurers to Germany from the 1560s, see Wolf R. Baumann, *The Merchants Adventurers and the Continental Cloth-Trade (1560s–1620s)* (Berlin and Boston, 1990); generally on the Merchant Adventurers before the move to Hamburg, see Douglas R. Bisson, *The Merchant Adventurers of England: The Company and the Crown, 1474–1564* (Newark, 1993).

37 Mehler, Küchelmann, and Holterman, "Falcon Trade", 251; Ehrenberg, *Hamburg und England*, 102. See Section 2.4.

38 Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 86–87. See Section 4.3.6.

39 "ene broderschupp genannt Sunte Annen der Iβlandesfarer". SAH 710–1, W50 (15000404-HAM00). The confraternity should not be confused with the confraternity of St Anne of skippers and sailors in the Franciscan monastery, which was founded in 1492 and became a general society for seafarers in the 1520s (Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 168–171).

40 Not coincidentally, this was also the monastery where the *Englandfahrer* held their religious services: Brandes, "Brüderschaften", 79.

a chapel with an altar "between the four pillars in the northwestern end of the church", where the confraternity also had the right to bury its members. The brothers of the monastery in turn promised to read two masses weekly, one on Monday and one on Tuesday, and to organise two visits to the graves of deceased members (*begengknisse*) annually, with vigils and masses for the souls, one around the time the ships left Hamburg for Iceland around the middle of Lent, the other after the ships had returned on the Monday before St Andrew's Day (30 November). For this, the members paid a one-time fee of 75 mark and 15 mark annually.[41] The seal stamp of the confraternity, which is still in existence, shows the Virgin and Child with St Anne, above a coat of arms with the Icelandic crowned stockfish and the Hamburg castle with three towers (Figure 7.1).[42]

The association of the Iceland merchants with St John's monastery would not last. In 1513, the confraternity acquired an unfinished chapel in the parish church of St Peter (Figure 6.15), with the right to use a part of the cemetery in front of the chapel for their burials. The chapel was paid for and completed over the years by donations of the members and was consecrated in 1520.[43] The next year the altar was moved from the monastery of St John to the new location, and the last payment to the monks of St John was made in 1524,[44] although the Iceland merchants probably remained closely associated with the monastery until its dissolution after the Reformation in 1529.[45] Four clerics of the church are said to have been employed by the confraternity for religious services, and payments to another three are known.[46]

As it happened, the confraternity did not enjoy its new chapel in St Peter's church for long, either. After the Reformation they had to give up their properties, and some liturgical objects were sold to benefit the poor in 1530. Later they also gave up the chapel, and moved all movable property from the church in 1535.[47] These objects were probably sold, or used for the church that was built in Hafnarfjörður in Iceland around the same time.[48]

As with other confraternities, poor relief was one of the most important functions of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants, and this became

41 SAH 710–1, W50 (15000404HAM00). For the text of the foundation charter, see *DI* 16:242 (with many transcription errors); or Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 17–20.

42 Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, inv. no. 1978.29.

43 See Piper, "Annenkapelle", 167–175 for a detailed analysis of the construction and interior of the chapel, based on the confraternity's account books.

44 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 21–24.

45 Piper, "Beziehungen der Islandfahrer", 179.

46 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 25–26.

47 Piper, "Geschichte der Annenkapelle", 172–173; Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 27–28.

48 See Section 5.4.3.

Figure 7.1: Seal of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants. Photograph courtesy of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, inv. no. 1978.29.

its main activity after the German trade with Iceland was prohibited in 1601 and the members lost their church in Hafnarfjörður as a consequence.[49] In the year preceding the confraternity's formal establishment, the *Islandfahrer* acquired a house in the Rosenstraße for accommodation of the poor, which was rebuilt in 1552 and then sold in 1572. It is unknown where the poor lived until 1657, when they were moved to the *Seefahrer-Armenhaus*.[50] The confraternity in this way

49 Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 86; Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 30–32.

50 Piper, "Armenwohnungen". Possibly they were already living in the *Seefahrer-Armenhaus* after 1572. At least one resident is known: skipper Peter Wirckes, who is known to have sailed to Iceland in 1569 and 1570 and donated to the confraternity (SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), ff. 212, 217), lived in the *Seefahrer-Armenhaus* in 1580 as a poor and sick man (Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 173).

acted as an institution for social security for its members and their families, who could count on financial support in the case of death or misfortune.

Where it comes to the commercial aspects of the North Atlantic trade, there are hardly any indications for the involvement of the confraternity, other than providing a venue for social contact for men with shared business interests. The account books of the confraternity show no signs of commercial activity other than the sales of fish that were received as donations, expenditures for the maintenance of the church building and its inventory in Iceland, and investment of the capital of the confraternity in annuities.[51] Baasch has noted that when the *Islandfahrer* acted as a common group, the confraternity usually was not mentioned, unless the matter directly involved the confraternity itself.[52] The only involvement of the confraternity in the commercial side of the Icelandic trade was its contribution to the costs of the envoys sent to the Danish king to discuss the Icelandic trade in 1540, 1545, and 1550. Of course, this was in the confraternity's interest, as its incomes depended on the continuity of this trade.[53]

We are well informed about the finances of the confraternity because of the survival of a large part of its account, capital, and donation registers. In the early years, the confraternity depended on donations from its members to fund its activities. These donations often took the form of stockfish from ships returning from the North Atlantic. With the introduction of a donation register in 1533, the donation process became formalised: it was now obligatory for those sailing to the North Atlantic islands to make a donation to the confraternity. A note in the beginning of the first register indicates that those who did not make donations could not count on the confraternity's support in times of trouble.[54] It is probably no coincidence that the register was started in 1533: the end of the religious services in Hamburg and the construction of a church in Hafnarfjörður around the same time[55] forced the confraternity to restructure its finances. In the first account book, in which donations were listed as well as income for the confraternity and

51 SAH 612-2/5, 1 vol. 1.

52 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 117. Significantly, the response of Hamburg merchants to the plundering of the monastery in Viðey, 16 January 1540 (*DI* 10:224 – 15400116HAM00), written in the names of the merchants and skippers sailing to Iceland, is sealed with a seal of one of them, not with the seal of the confraternity.

53 Baasch, 118; Steinbrinker, "Fahrergesellschaften", 113–114.

54 "Ter glicken scholen ock de jennen, so schon up Islandt van hyr segelen, und averst de broderschop den armen thom bestenn nergens mede begifftigen edder bedencken, und men desfalls ehre nhamen mit ehrer gave in dessem boke nicht vorteikent findet, wen ße nottrofftich wurden, ungeachtet ehrer bede und anderer vorbede, der almissen nicht deilhafftich syn noch genetenn". SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. IXv.

55 See Section 5.4.3.

which started in 1520, we can see that donations were made by men on returning ships well before 1533, but apparently on a more voluntary basis as they are not recorded in a consistent fashion.[56]

Donations were made and recorded on a piece of paper (*sedel*) in Iceland before the ships returned to Hamburg, and then copied into the register after the voyage. It took the merchants in Iceland a few years to get used to this custom, as a complaint in the register indicates.[57] Donations were usually made in stockfish, which was transported back to Hamburg and sold there on the market by the confraternity's treasurer.[58] Sometimes donations were also made in sulphur (from ships sailing to Eyjafjörður and Húsavík) or in money; donations of the latter became more and more common towards the end of the sixteenth century.[59]

Moreover, the special donations of *kerckenfisch* ('church fish') were made by the merchants on the two ships sailing to Hafnarfjörður annually. Usually the ten most important merchants on board donated ten fish each, amounting to a total of 200 *kerckenfische* per year. It is likely that these donations were used to pay for the maintenance of the church in Hafnarfjörður and to pay for the priest there, as the German community in Hafnarfjörður probably made most use of the church.[60] The priests serving the church made donations themselves as well when returning to Hamburg (Table 7.1). While we know only that most of them were parish priests in towns around Hamburg prior to their tenures in Iceland, we do have more details concerning some. One priest, Lucas van Collen, was of a higher social standing: he had been educated in Erfurt, Frankfurt, and Jena, and after his tenure in Hafnarfjörður ended in 1595 he served as head priest of the parish of St James (*Jakobi*) in Hamburg until 1609.[61]

56 SAH 612-2/5, 1 vol. 1.

57 "Anno XVc XXXIII sinth nicht meer alße van dren schepen, alßee van Thonnes Pinxten sinen schepe, Hans Wittorps sinen schepe, und Marcus Voth sinen schepe, de ßedell aver gegeven, etlicke namen angetekenth, averst nicht wo ofte wath ßee van emen ideren in Islandt ontfangen hebben, in Islandt angetekenth, ßo dat gar nicht groth van tho boke tho scriven is, will swarlick in den gebrueck tho bringen sin daer dith bock umme angefanghen is". SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 3r.

58 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00).

59 See the overview of the donation register online: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-016

60 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00); Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 195–196; Walter, "Die Hamburger Islandesfahrer", 144.

61 Thomas Otto Achelis, "Zur Biographie des Lucas van Cöllen", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 36 (1937): 168–169; Friederike Christiane Koch, "Geistliche an der Kirche der hamburger Islandfahrer in Hafnarfjörður 1538–1603", *Island. Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Isländischen Gesellschaft e.V. Köln und der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islands e.V. Hamburg* 7.2 (2001): 51n6.

Table 7.1: Priests of the Hamburg church in Hafnarfjörður.

Year(s)	Name
1538, 1539	Her Jochym
1540, 1541	Cordt Gelker
1542	Hynrick Konge
1546	N.N.
1547	Her Johan
1549	Andreas Hinricks
1552–1555	Johannes Bramstede[62]
1569	Christoffer Hane
1575	Jost Heit
1580–1581	Peter Petersen
1582	Frans Keiser
1590	Jurgen Wunderlick
1591	Samuel Kreye
1592, 1595, 1600–1601	Johan Fabritius
1593–1594	Lucas van Collen
1596–1597	Johan Schonefeld
1597	Wernerus Meyer
1599	Andreas Hoffman
1601–1602	Nicolaus Stuue
1603	Bernardus Loen

Sources: SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00); Koch, "Geistliche", 50–51; Kurt Piper, Geistliche an der Kirche der Hamburger Islandfahrer in Hafnarfjörður/Südwest-Island 1538–1603, 1990.

The end of the direct trade with Iceland in 1602 created another difficulty for the confraternity's finances. Donations were still made by members of the confraternity, who now sailed to Iceland for Danish shipowners, and by former *Islandfahrer* who had returned from France, the Iberian peninsula, and Russia, but these donations stopped in the 1620s. The trade with Shetland, which still continued, brought in some money, but these donations also came to a standstill after 1644 (although Hamburg merchants continued to trade in Shetland for more than half a century). Instead, donations were made by former *Islandfahrer* separately, not connected to any actual journey. The number of these individual donations rose quickly after 1602, to often over 100 a year, and continued until

62 In 1553 unnamed; 1555: "Johannes de predicante Salige" (SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1, f. 133r).

1656, but probably came nowhere near to matching the consistent donations from the sixteenth century.[63]

The confraternity came to depend more and more on its other main forms of income, the sale of *Renten* (annuities) on immovable property on the city's capital market, and the renting out of breweries.[64] These capital transactions are attested for the first time in 1518, but were only recorded in a register from 1573 onwards, signifying their increasing importance for the confraternity's finances.[65] In 1657, by which time most of the original *Islandfahrer* had died, the eldermen decided to merge the confraternity with the *Seefahrer-Armenhaus*, a poor relief institution for seamen, which had been founded in 1535.[66] The capital was managed by a separate foundation, the *Islandische Casse*, which existed until 1843.[67]

We are less well informed about the members of the confraternity, due to the absence of statutes[68] or member lists. It is therefore tempting to see those who made donations to the confraternity as its members. However, it is quite doubtful that some of the persons mentioned in the donation registers were members, such as the occasional falcon catcher or the Icelandic passengers who did not settle in Hamburg. These people would be unlikely to attend religious services frequently or to enjoy the support of the confraternity in times of trouble. And even for those who would be able to partake in the confraternity's services, such as the many crew members, it is not certain that they would have been members as well. Membership in many confraternities was limited,[69] and we have no information that indicates if this was the case for the confraternity of the Iceland merchants as well.

There are, however, some general statements we can make about the members of the confraternity, based on the account books. First, its members included not only the Iceland merchants but also those trading with the Faroes

63 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 32, claims incorrectly that providing loans from the confraternity's capital became the only source of income after the donations from the Icelandic trade dried up.

64 This was a common enterprise for Hamburg's confraternities; see Brandes, "Brüderschaften", 164–165.

65 SAH 612-2/5, 4 vol. 1.

66 SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 4: 1 August 1657 (16570801HAM00). See Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 171–172.

67 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 32–36; Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 183–184; Steinbrinker, "Fahrergesellschaften", 116.

68 Brandes, "Brüderschaften", 127 cites §12 from the alleged 1492 statutes of the confraternity of the Iceland merchants. According to Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 12nn42–44, however, these are actually the statutes of the confraternity of St Anne in the monastery of Mary Magdalene (SAH 611–8 Seefahrer-Armenhaus, No. 9).

69 Brandes, "Brüderschaften", 141–142.

and Shetland, and some of them were sailing to more than one region.[70] It is remarkable that the donations of Shetland merchants end in 1644, before their trade stopped and before the confraternity was merged with the *Seefahrer-Armenhaus*. I can think of no reasonable explanation for this, other than that it reflects the general declining importance of the merchant societies in Hamburg's foreign trade in the seventeenth century.[71] Second, at least some servants of the merchants seem to have been members, as a separate table within the confraternity is mentioned for the *gesellen* in 1584.[72] Third, it is possible to determine most of the names of the eldermen (four per year), the treasurers (*rekensmanne*), the *schaffer* (responsible for the annual feast of the confraternity; one or two per year), and others with duties in the confraternity (Appendix C).[73]

7.1.2 Bremen

At first glance, the organising institutions behind the North Atlantic trade from Hamburg were absent in Bremen: there is neither mention of a society nor of a confraternity of Iceland merchants. However, if we look beneath the surface, the community of North Atlantic merchants in Bremen relied upon remarkably similar structures that performed many of the same functions as the institutions in Hamburg, namely institutions based on common commercial interests that fostered social gathering and information exchange or provided religious and charitable services.

In Bremen, the separate *Fahrergesellschaften* of Hamburg are absent in the Middle Ages. A society of Bergen merchants was founded in 1550, and a society of *Englandfahrer* in the seventeenth century.[74] Instead, there existed a general society of skippers and merchants who traded abroad, the *kopmann tho Bremen*, which appears in the sources in the fourteenth century, and which acquired a house, the *Schütting*, on the market square in 1425. The building became a place where merchants shared their knowledge and news, especially in the winter

70 See Section 7.4.

71 Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 209.

72 "Item noch entfangen dat geltt dat by den tafelenn van den gesellen gesammeltt wurth". SAH 612-2/5, 1 vol. 2, f. 82v; Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 6n12.

73 Sometimes other officers are named, such as spokesmen (*vorsprake/wortman*) and procurators (1633–1656). For an overview of these positions, see Piper, *Verzeichnis der tätigen Mitglieder*.

74 Entholt and Beutin, *Bremen und Nordeuropa*, 9–11; Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 34–37.

months outside the trading season; their annual feast was held during this time.[75] The four eldermen of the society, of whom the two oldest were re-elected after two years according to the 1451 ordinances of the society, acquired considerable political influence in Bremen in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Like the eldermen in Hamburg, they took steps to protect the foreign trade, ensured safe passage for ships in the Weser river by maintaining the navigation marks, and acted as arbiters in conflicts between merchants.[76] Moreover, many city councillors in Bremen had been eldermen of the *kopmann* before.[77]

It is likely that the Bremen merchants dealing with the North Atlantic islands were members of the merchant society, although membership was not compulsory for merchants in the city.[78] There are no references to a formal organisation of North Atlantic merchants in Bremen like in Hamburg (although the existence of a separate society of Iceland merchants is questionable there as well, as we have seen). The Shetland and Iceland merchants do appear together in cases that concerned their common interests,[79] but it seems to have remained an informal gathering of merchants who traded in the same regions, possibly within the *kopmann tho Bremen*. Six North Atlantic merchants are known to have been eldermen of the society.[80] Moreover, at least three Shetland merchants are known to have been members of the society of *Bergenfahrer*, which was established in 1550: Ladewich Wickboldt, who was also elderman of the *kopmann*, Eler Brede,

75 Lydia Niehoff, *550 Jahre Tradition der Unabhängigkeit: Chronik der Handelskammer Bremen* (Bremen, 2001), 12–26; Noltenius, *Elterleute des Kaufmanns*, 11–19; Hermann Entholt, *Der Schütting. Das Haus der bremischen Kaufmannschaft* (Bremen, 1931), 8–14; Ernst Dünzelmann, "Die bremische Kaufmannsgilde und ihre Elterleute", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 18 (1896): 85–86.

76 Niehoff, *550 Jahre Tradition*, 21–22; Dünzelmann, "Kaufmannsgilde", 77–79; Ernst Dünzelmann, "Beiträge zur bremischen Verfassungsgeschichte", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 17 (1895): 30–31; Hill, *Die Stadt und ihr Markt*, 72–73.

77 For the numbers, see Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 22n28.

78 Dünzelmann, "Kaufmannsgilde", 78.

79 E.g. in 1567 as "die gemeinen Ißlanderfahrer und burger dahselbst zu Bremenn" (*DI* 15:12 – 15670922BRE00); the first such mention of Shetland merchants is on 15 December 1612: "Sämptliche Hittländen fharer" (SAB 2-R.11.kk. – 16121215BRE00). Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch" (2001): 21n16, points to a document from 1509 (SAB 2-P.6.a.9.b.2., f. 81r – 15091220BRE00) in which "de frundt unde copmanne, de in Yszlandt gereth haddenn" are mentioned as the first reference to a distinct group of Iceland merchants, but it should be noted that the document concerns the crew of one ship that sailed to Iceland, and that the formula therefore refers to the merchants and owners of the specific ship, not necessarily to the community of Iceland merchants in its entirety.

80 Herman Wedeman (1563), Gerdt Gerbade (1568), Frantz Schomaker (1568), Ladewich Wickboldt (1573), Cordt Holler (1581), and Dirick Pestorp (1604). See Appendix D.

and Hinrick Esick.[81] This suggests that at least some of the Bergen and North Atlantic merchants in Bremen had shared interests.

Likewise, in Bremen there are no references to a confraternity of North Atlantic merchants. The confraternity's important function of providing for the welfare of its members in their old age was instead performed by the *Haus Seefahrt*, an institution for poor and retired sailors not unlike the *Seefahrer-Armenhaus* in Hamburg.[82] Unlike in Hamburg, however, in Bremen the North Atlantic merchants were directly involved in the foundation of the institution in 1545.[83] One of the eight members of the founding committee and an elderman in 1563 was Herman Wedeman, who is mentioned as skipper in a contract for a *maschup* trading with eastern Iceland in 1549, and as merchant in a similar contract from 1572.[84] And skipper Brüning Rulves, one of the first known inhabitants of the building that was acquired by the foundation in 1561, often sailed to Bergen and once to Shetland, according to his memoirs.[85] Finally, in 1592 we find the coats of arms of Iceland merchant Evert Hoveman and Shetland merchant Gerdt Hemeling in the gallery of eldermen of the institution.

The foundation charter of the *Haus Seefahrt* explicitly mentions the merchants sailing to the "fish lands" of Bergen, Iceland, and Shetland, and refers to practices before the Reformation that were quite similar to those of the Hamburg confraternity of St Anne, even though a formal confraternity did not exist in Bremen. According to the charter, merchants returning from the North Atlantic used to spend what money remained to them on "masses and other ungodly [i.e. Catholic] services". Now, after the Reformation, the charter advises that money should be put to good use by donating it to the *Haus Seefahrt*, although the voluntary character of the donations was emphasised.[86] Similarly,

81 See Appendix D. Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 36n95, also mentions councillors Vasmer Bake and Luder Losekanne as members of the society of Bergen merchants who were also active in the Iceland trade, but she is confusing them with the actual merchants who happened to have had the same names.

82 Karl Heinz Schwebel, *'Haus Seefahrt', Bremen, seine Kaufleute und Kapitäne: vierhundert Jahre Dienst am deutschen Seemann, 1545–1945* (Bremen, 1947), 18–22.

83 The text of the foundation charter can be found in Kohl, *Haus Seefahrt zu Bremen*, 15–19 (Low German transcript), 20–24 (modern High German translation).

84 Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 42; Kohl, *Haus Seefahrt zu Bremen*, 15. See Sections 6.6.3 and 7.2.1.

85 Focke, "Seefahrtenbuch", 99.

86 "Szo ock in vortydenn uth den maschuppenn de in de vyschlande, alse Bergenn, Islande unde Hytlande to segelende plegen in orher wedderheymkumpste, tho missen unde anderenn ungodtlyckenn denstenn angelecht unde gekeret, wes in densulfften masschuppenn averboholden

the *brokegelt* that had been traditionally collected on ships as punishment for minor offences should be given to the foundation.[87] The charter, however, does not specify what these services exactly encompassed before 1545, although they probably had a charitable element. Nor do we know where these services took place, although it is likely the North Atlantic merchants used an altar in either the church of St Martin (near the harbour, where the *kopmann* had had an altar previously),[88] or the church of Our Lady (next to the town hall, where the members of the *Haus Seefahrt* seem to have held their services).[89]

Another important funding mechanism for the *Haus Seefahrt* was the so-called *Bodmerei*. This was a system in which a shipowner or merchant borrowed capital for the cargo of a ship, with the ship's bottom (*bodem*) as collateral: the loan would have to be repaid with interest after the ship returned, unless it wrecked. It functioned therefore both as a method of acquiring capital for freighting a ship and as a kind of insurance.[90] In 1562, it was made compulsory for members of the *Haus Seefahrt* to borrow at least 20 guilders *Bodmerei* when one undertook a voyage, the interests of which provided a large part of the institution's income.[91]

In Bremen, therefore, there were many of the same structures as existed in Hamburg for the organisation of the North Atlantic trade, but with a lesser degree of formalisation. Zickermann suggests that the relatively small number of Bremen's Iceland and Shetland merchants might have been the reason for this lack of a formal organisation.[92] Although it is hard to determine how many Bremen merchants traded in the North Atlantic, due to the absence of sources comparable to the Hamburg donation register, it was at most half of the number

unde nicht vorteret, So nu ein sodant deme Godtliken worde entiegens, des wyllenn alse nu de jennenn de sodane Masschup holden, dat jenne wo se in ohen heymkumpsten averbeholdende werdenn, tho vorbeteringe der vorgerordenn Kystenn, alse tho enem mylden unde Christlickenn wercke ock anleggen unde kerenn, wes des ener jderen Masschup na ohres handels unde personen gelegenheyde wyl anstann unde tho donde syn, jdoch also, dat se gelyck dar tho unvorbundenn scholenn weszenn". Kohl, *Haus Seefahrt zu Bremen*, 4–5, 18.

87 See Section 4.1.4.

88 Noltenius, *Elterleute des Kaufmanns*, 38; Dünzelmann, "Kaufmannsgilde", 78.

89 Kohl, *Haus Seefahrt zu Bremen*, 12; Dietrich Kohl, "Das Haus Seefahrt in Bremen", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 18 (1912): 7.

90 Wilhelm Ebel, *Lübisches Kaufmannsrecht. Vornehmlich nach lübecker Ratsurteilen des 15./16. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1952), 103; Brück, "Kooperationen der Schiffer", 196–197; Albrecht Cordes, "Bodmerei", *Hanselexikon*, accessed 8 August 2018, http://www.hansischergeschichtsverein.de/lexikon.

91 Kohl, "Haus Seefahrt in Bremen", 30; Schwebel, *Haus Seefahrt*, 29–30.

92 Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*, 85.

of Hamburg North Atlantic merchants, and probably considerably less than that. Bremen merchants used about four harbours in Iceland, whereas Hamburg merchants traded in more than ten, and in Shetland, where Bremen merchants probably outnumbered their Hamburg counterparts, the number of people on board of a ship was lower.[93] Considering that even in Hamburg separate institutions for North Atlantic merchants did not develop fully (except for the confraternity), Zickermann's suggestion might make sense.

7.1.3 Lübeck and Oldenburg

In Lübeck, after Hamburg and Bremen the town with the greatest presence of merchants in the North Atlantic, it is hard to track down a community of Iceland merchants. This has to do with the small number of Iceland merchants based there: between 1442 and 1600, only twenty names of Iceland merchants from Lübeck are known.[94] Consequently, no society of Iceland merchants is known in a city that had a high density of societies, confraternities, and other social institutions with a connection to the international trade. The oldest societies in the city were those of the Scania and Bergen merchants, which dated back to the late fourteenth century; societies of Riga, Novgorod, and Stockholm merchants were established later. A general organisation for international trade as in Hamburg or Bremen is not known until the ninteenth century, however.[95] A society of skippers (*Schiffergesellschaft*) was established in 1535, not unlike the *Haus Seefahrt* in Bremen or the *Seefahrer-Armenhaus* in Hamburg, which was also concerned with poor relief and social security and had its origin in the

93 See Sections 4.1.1 and 5.1.

94 In 1442: merchants Cordt and Henning Sten, skipper Remmert Ulenhot (*UBL* 8:61); 1494: Clawes Swarte; 1537: skipper Herman Vurborn, merchants Helmich Schmid and Tonnies Mutter (*DI* 10:112); 1552/3: skippers Cordt Stael, Cordt Vebbeke, Henrick Kron, and Claus Rode (*DI* 12:323, Table 5.1); 1555: Jacob van Salthen (*DI* 13:6); 1557: Gerdt Ruther, Jorgen Koninck, and Cordt Kroene (*DI* 13:196); 1565: Bartholomeus Tinappel (*DI* 14:289 – 15650814KOB00); 1579: Hinrick Sluter (*KB* 1576–1579, 793); late sixteenth century: Herman Oldenseel, Hans Delmenhorst, Luder Ottersen (see Section 7.2.6 and Appendix A). See also Bei der Wieden, "Lübeckische Islandfahrt", 9–30.

95 Ulrich Simon, "Wurzeln der Schiffergesellschaft. Die St. Nikolaus-Bruderschaft und die St. Annen-Bruderschaft", in *Seefahrt, Schiff und Schifferbrüder: 600 Jahre Schiffergesellschaft zu Lübeck, 1401–2001*, ed. Rolf Hammel-Kiesow (Lübeck, 2001), 15; Noltenius, *Elterleute des Kaufmanns*, 41; for the Scania merchants, see Ernst Baasch, *Die Lübecker Schonenfahrer*, Hansische Geschichtsquellen, NF 4 (Lübeck, 1922).

two medieval confraternities of St Nicholas and St Anne.[96] Finally, there were three exclusive social clubs (*Kompanien*): the *Zirkelgesellschaft* was comprised almost exclusively of councillors, but the associations of merchants and the *Greveraden* association counted many merchants among their members.[97]

Only one Iceland merchant has been identified as belonging to any of these institutions: Bartholomeus Tinappel, who was elderman of the Bergenfahrer from 1539 to 1544.[98] This is curious, since Lübeck's Bergen merchants vehemently opposed the Icelandic trade, due to their interest in upholding the Bergen staple.[99] It may be, however, that by the middle of the sixteenth century, with the Icelandic trade having been openly conducted for over 50 years, their objections had softened. Moreover, Tinappel was granted a licence for Dýrafjörður in Iceland in 1565, long after serving as elderman of the *Bergenfahrer*.[100] His Icelandic activity can probably be considered an outgrowth of his trading interests in Bergen.

In Oldenburg, where the long-distance maritime trade expanded considerably in the last decades of the sixteenth century, there existed a society of skippers (*Schiffergesellschaft*), which enacted new statutes in 1574, but which was probably much older.[101] Of the 28 members mentioned in 1574, two were later active in the Iceland trade: Jurgen Oltken and skipper Clawes Kock.[102]

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96 Simon, "Wurzeln"; Thomas Brück, "Nur Schiffer? Die Mitglieder der Schiffergesellschaft im 16. Jahrhundert", in *Seefahrt, Schiff und Schifferbrüder: 600 Jahre Schiffergesellschaft zu Lübeck, 1401–2001*, ed. Rolf Hammel-Kiesow (Lübeck, 2001), 33–34; Antjekathrin Graßmann, "Zur Nächstenliebe und Wohltätigkeit der Schiffergesellschaft von den Anfängen bis ins 19. Jh.", in Hammel-Kiesow, ed., *Seefahrt, Schiff und Schifferbrüder*, 63.

97 Sonja Dünnebeil, "Die drei großen Kompanien als genossenschaftliche Verbindungen der Lübecker Oberschicht", in *Genossenschaftliche Strukturen in der Hanse*, ed. Nils Jörn, Detlef Kattinger, and Horst Wernicke, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte NF 48 (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1999), 205–222; Wilhelm Brehmer, "Verzeichnis der Mitglieder der Zirkelkompanie, nebst Angaben über ihre persönliche Verhältnisse", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 5 (1888): 393–454; Antjekathrin Graßmann, "Die Greveradenkompanie. Zu den führenden Kaufleutegesellschaften in Lübeck um die Wende zum 16. Jahrhundert", in *Der hansische Sonderweg? Beiträge zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Hanse*, ed. Stuart Jenks and Michael North, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte 39 (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1993), 109–134.

98 Bruns, *Bergenfahrer*, 288 B.

99 See Section 3.4.3.

100 See Section 6.4.2.

101 Wolfgang Hartung, *Die Oldenburgische Schiffergesellschaft von 1574* (Oldenburg, 1975), 12–13; Kohl, "Überseeische Handelsunternehmungen", 438.

102 Dietrich Kohl, "Die Oldenburgische Schiffergesellschaft vom 2. Februar 1574", *Gemeindeblatt der Stadt Oldenburg* 14 (1904): 4, 7; reprinted in Hartung, *Oldenburgische Schiffergesellschaft*; Kohl, "Oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 42.

7.2 Trading companies

The practical organisation of the North Atlantic trade has been subject to many assumptions, but has not received much careful study. The following section will therefore take a closer look at this subject. As the North Atlantic trade took place in a period in which the trading practices in the Hanseatic network were changing under the influence of structural changes in the European economy,[103] it is worthwhile to sketch the general historical development first.

During the Early and High Middle Ages, merchants accompanied their cargo in long-distance trading, generally owning and sailing ships themselves.[104] As early as the twelfth century, however, modifications to this practice were introduced: the kind of company known as *wedderlegginge* emerged then, in which two merchants put together the capital for trading, but only one accompanied the commodities to their destination, while the other stayed at home.[105] In the course of the thirteenth century, innovations in shipbuilding,[106] German settlement in newly founded cities along the Baltic Sea, and the growing use of writing for communication and accounting,[107] led to the establishment of networks of sedentary merchants, who traded with their partners, often family members, but no longer accompanied the cargo.[108] Emblematic of this last development was the famous Hanseatic *Fernhändler* ('long-distance trader'), of whom the brothers Veckinghusen, who belonged to a large network between the Baltic and Flanders, even extending to Venice, were exemplars.[109]

103 See Carsten Jahnke, "Mit Strukturen von gestern auf Märkte von morgen? Hansische Kaufleute und deren Handelsorganisation an der Wende vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert", in *Hansischer Handel im Strukturwandel vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rolf Hammel-Kiesow and Stephan Selzer, Hansische Studien 25 (Trier, 2016), 101–136.

104 Christina Deggim, "Zur Seemannsarbeit in der Handelsschiffahrt Norddeutschlands und Skandinaviens vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 117 (1999): 7–10; Max Pappenheim, "Stýrimenn und hásetar im älteren westnordischen Schiffahrtsrecht", in *Deutsche Islandforschung 1: Kultur*, Veröffentlichungen der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Universitätsgesellschaft 28 (Breslau, 1930), 246–282.

105 Carsten Jahnke, "Handelsstrukturen im Ostseeraum im 12. und beginnenden 13. Jahrhundert. Ansätze einer Neubewertung", *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 126 (2008): 150; Hammel-Kiesow, "Schriftlichkeit", 216–217; Rudolf Holbach, "Hansische Kaufleute und Handelspraktiken", *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 88 (2009): 83.

106 Jahnke, "Handelsstrukturen", 176–178, 180.

107 See Hammel-Kiesow, "Schriftlichkeit".

108 Holbach, "Hansische Kaufleute"; Carsten Jahnke, "Schiffer und Kaufmann: ein schwieriges Verhältnis", in *Seefahrt, Schiff und Schifferbrüder: 600 Jahre Schiffergesellschaft zu Lübeck*, ed. Rolf Hammel-Kiesow (Lübeck, 2001), 133–138; Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 211–213.

109 See Jahnke, "Schiffer und Kaufmann"; Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 219–233.

Finally, the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century witnessed the establishment of larger trading companies with hierarchical structures after the southern European model, with representatives and servants in various trading places who did not trade on their own account anymore.[110]

The development of sedentary merchants and trading networks brought about a separation of the roles of merchant, skipper, and shipowner in the course of the Late Middle Ages and the early modern period. With the growing technical and financial complexity of seafaring, skippers were more and more hired by shipowners and merchants.[111] In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, though, the distinction between these roles was still fluid and the skipper was often still a merchant and part shipowner as well. This is reflected by the fact that institutions such as the *Haus Seefahrt* or the merchant societies in the harbour cities counted merchants as well as skippers among its members and eldermen.[112] The skipper in this time has therefore been characterised as a "seafaring shipowner".[113]

The North Atlantic trade, where the commercial infrastructure on which the Hanseatic network was based in the North and Baltic Sea regions was absent, has been characterised as primitive in the sense that the merchants had to revert to old forms of trading. The absence of sedentary merchants in the north to whom they could send their goods and communicate in written form forced merchants to accompany their commodities themselves, as had been the norm centuries before.[114] Friederike Koch sees the absence of these merchants from their home towns for a large part of the year because of their travels as explanation for the limited

110 Mike Burkhardt, "Kaufmannsnetzwerke und Handelskultur. Zur Verbindung von interpersonellen Beziehungsgeflechten und kaufmännischem Habitus im spätmittelalterlichen Ostseeraum", in *Raumbildung durch Netzwerke? Der Ostseeraum zwischen Wikingerzeit aus archäologischer und geschichtswissenschaftlicher Perspektive*, ed. Sunhild Kleingärtner and Gabriel Zeilinger (Bonn, 2012), 126.

111 Holterman, "Ship Crews"; Deggim, "Seemannsarbeit", 7–11; Götz Landwehr, *Das Seerecht der Hanse (1365–1614): vom Schiffordnungsrecht zum Seehandelsrecht*, Berichte aus den Sitzungen der Joachim-Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 21,1 (Göttingen, 2003), 80–83; Jann Markus Witt, *Master next God?: der nordeuropäische Handelsschiffskapitän vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, Schriften des Deutschen Schiffahrtsmuseums (Hamburg, 2001), 37; Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 41–42; Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 195–196.

112 Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 41; Kohl, "Haus Seefahrt in Bremen", 7–9; Thomas Brück, "'voringhe' und Kaufmannsgut: der Eigenhandel der Schiffer und Seeleute im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit", in Seefahrt, Schiff und Schifferbrüder: 600 Jahre Schiffergesellschaft zu Lübeck, 1401–2001, ed. Rolf Hammel-Kiesow (Lübeck, 2001), 131.

113 Walther Vogel, *Geschichte der deutschen Seeschiffahrt* (Berlin, 1915), 375; cited by Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 41; See also Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 197.

114 Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 39; Steinbrinker, "Fahrergesellschaften", 111.

influence they had in the city of Hamburg, for example.[115] However, it is the question whether the characterisation of organisational structures in the North Atlantic trade as old-fashioned or backward holds up upon a closer look. It seems that the generalisations sketched above arose due to confusion about the roles of skippers and merchants in the trade and by an over-representation of seafaring merchants in the sources. In actuality, the merchants active in the North Atlantic trade used contemporary structures and organisational forms, which they adapted to the specific conditions they encountered. These will be analysed in detail below.

7.2.1 The *maschup*

The trade with the North Atlantic was often conducted by a trading company, which was usually called a *maschup*. A *maschup* or (*vullkommene*) *mascopey* (from Dutch *matschoppie,* 'association') was a form of merchant company that came into existence in northern Germany in the late fifteenth century, in which multiple merchants pooled their capital, and shared the profit from as well as the liability for business undertakings.[116] In the centuries before, merchants in the Hanseatic network had usually operated in a *wedderleginge*, a construction in which two or more merchants would both trade in the common interest, without a clear definition of trading goals or time frame.[117] The new system, which has been interpreted as Hanseatic merchants adapting their trading systems to changing economic circumstances, provided at once more flexibility and structure. The *maschup* was usually formed for a specific goal and a limited period, sometimes only a single voyage, and could include clauses to prohibit competition or the trading of partners on their own account. The *maschup* made accounting much more transparent compared to the *wedderleginge*, where it was usually only possible to calculate profits after many years or after the death of one of the partners. Moreover, it created the possibility for some merchants to concentrate exclusively on the company, with richer partners involved in other branches of trade largely providing financial backing.[118]

We are well informed about how these companies functioned in the case of the North Atlantic trade, due to the survival of two *maschup* contracts from

115 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 39.
116 Albrecht Cordes, *Spätmittelalterlicher Gesellschaftshandel im Hanseraum*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte NF 45 (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar, 1998), 264–266; Ebel, *Lübisches Kaufmannsrecht*, 90–92.
117 Cordes, *Gesellschaftshandel*, 121–122.
118 Jahnke, "Strukturen von gestern", 111–113.

Bremen from 1549 and 1572[119] and a contract from 1580 from Oldenburg.[120] The Oldenburg charter does not use a specific term for the company, which Kohl has therefore characterised as a *Gesellschaft*.[121] The use of this term ('society' or 'association') has led some to conclude that in Oldenburg a society of Iceland merchants existed, comparable to the *Fahrergesellschaften* in Hamburg.[122] However, the Oldenburg company appears to have had a structure similar to that of the Bremen *maschups*, and should therefore be interpreted strictly as the kind of company known as a *maschup* in Bremen and Hamburg. Most probably, the parties involved were the only merchants active in the Icelandic trade in Oldenburg, so there was no reason for a general society of *Islandfahrer* in the city. Accidentally, the Oldenburg case is exceptionally well documented, with additional accounts detailing the costs for the acquisition and fitting out of a ship and letters about the sale of shares in the company from later years.[123] This enables us to trace the workings of these associations in considerable detail.

On 16 November 1580, a company was formed in Oldenburg consisting of sixteen persons, including two burgomasters and five city councillors, who were all part owners of a ship that was to sail to the harbour Kumbaravogur in Iceland. The actual trade was to be conducted by Joachim Kolling from Hooksiel, who had acquired a licence for the harbour the year before and who owned half of the ship.[124] He promised to risk his life on water and land and to acquire the desired commodities, sell them, and share the profit directly with his partners.[125] The company was never successful, however, as the city council in Bremen refused to grant permission for Roleff Gerdes, Kolling's intended skipper, to sail to Iceland, and Kolling subsequently got into financial trouble. The Count of Oldenburg intervened in 1585, requesting a prolongation of the licence in his own name, because Kolling had proved unreliable.[126]

The account book for the year 1585 shows that the company at that point comprised 29 partners, of whom only eight had been part of the previous company and with Count John of Oldenburg as part shipowner. Joachim Kolling by

119 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 8 April 1549 (15490408BRE00); 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00).
120 SAO 262–1, no. 1: 16 November 1580 (15801116OLD00).
121 Kohl, "Der oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 38.
122 I.e. by Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 37; Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 39, 50n329, 62.
123 NLO 20, -25, no. 6.
124 NLO 20, -25, no. 6: licence of 11 December 1579 (15791211SKA00).
125 SAO 262–1, no. 1: 16 November 1580 (15801116OLD00); Kohl, "Der oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 38, 42–43.
126 See Section 6.3.5.

this point had completely disappeared from the records.[127] According to the crew list from the same year, only two of these part shipowners sailed to Iceland themselves: skipper Clawes Kock and merchant Gerdt van Varel.[128] Moreover, the book contains accounts for the acquisition of a ship in Emden, for which each partner made a contribution.[129] In a letter that must have been written around 1585, an anonymous author informs the count that some partners were willing to sell their part in the ship, that the count's brother already owned eight parts,[130] and that the count could acquire three or four parts, which would cost about ten daler each. The costs for sailing the ship and freighting it with flour, cloth, beer, and other commodities would amount to 60 or 70 daler annually in total.[131] From a later source, a defence of the "common freighters of the Icelandic company" in response to debt claims by two Hamburg merchants against skipper and partner Clawes Kock, who had died in 1594, we can see that the partners were held liable for each other.[132]

It is the question how closely the organisation of the North Atlantic trade in Oldenburg matched the organisation of the trade from Bremen and Hamburg. After all, the company is not called a *maschup* in Oldenburg, and there was no tradition of the North Atlantic trade in Oldenburg prior to 1580, the attempts of Count Anthony I to enter into this trade in the decades before notwithstanding.[133] Moreover, the heavy involvement of the count and officials of the town government was quite distinct from typical practice in Bremen and Hamburg. On the other hand, Joachim Kolling did have good connections to merchants from Bremen and Hamburg: he had sailed with them before being granted his own licence, had borrowed money from them to set up his own company, and

127 SAO 262–1, no. 2 (15850307OLD00), p. 1.

128 SAO 262–1, no. 2 (15850307OLD00), pp. 10–11.

129 SAO 262–1, no. 2 (15850307OLD00), leaflets A.III and A.IV.

130 Anthony II, Count of Delmenhorst. He might have been the "herr cantzler" mentioned first in the list of part shipowners.

131 "Auch gnediger herr, ith mag e. g. nicht verhalten daß etzliche Aldenburgische burger willens sein ihr part an dem Ißlander schiff abzustehen, wan e. g. datzu willen hetten, kundte man mit demselben umb ein liderlichs handlen, e. g. bruder hatt acht partt, und kundte man vor e. g. woll 3 oder 4 partt bekommen ider partt ungefherlich umb 10 gemein thaler, aber die außeredung kostett uff ein jar woll 60 oder 70 thaler auff alle 3 partt zusamen, und das thuet man mit meel, wandt, bier und anderer whare". NLO 20, -25, no. 6 (15850000OLD01); Kohl, "Der oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 43.

132 "semptliche außredere der Ißlandischen parth". NLO 20, -25, no. 6: 14 December 1594 (15941214OLD00).

133 Kohl, "Überseeische Handelsunternehmungen", 426–428.

Bremen skipper Roleff Gerdes was his brother-in-law.[134] It is therefore not unlikely that the Oldenburg company had much in common with the kind of companies that traded with the North Atlantic from Hamburg and Bremen.

The *maschup* contract from Bremen of 8 April 1549 names ten persons who would be trading in Iceland,[135] with Herman Wedeman as skipper of the ship. The partners each promised to contribute what they would buy, catch, or acquire otherwise in Iceland to the common good of the *maschup*, and to act together for the profit of the company, just as they would do if trading on their own.[136] The *maschup* from 1572 comprised fifteen people, of whom eight stayed at home. This time the skipper was Bernd Losekanne, who had been one of the partners in the 1549 *maschup*. Others appear in both contracts as well: Luder Wedeman, Johan Reineke, Reineke Winters (he had died, and his share was taken over by his widow), Christoffer Meyer, and Herman Wedeman (these last two both remained in Bremen this time). The other participants often share surnames, indicative of the importance of family relations in the North Atlantic business.[137]

The 1572 contract contains the same conditions as the 1549 one, with the addition that partners were not allowed to be in another *maschup* that intended to trade in Iceland as well.[138] As has been sketched above, this was not uncommon in *maschup* contracts. An incident from 1548 underscores the danger of competition, when six merchants from Bremen complained that their former trading partners, with whom they had sailed to Hólmur in Iceland for some years, had now invited a man from Lübeck to sail with them and had used violence to deny their former partners access to the harbour; as a result they had lost the harbour to Lübeck merchants.[139] Moreover, trading on behalf of the *maschup* with strangers

134 See Section 6.3.5.

135 Although the contract only says "Iceland", from the context it becomes clear that their destination was the harbour called "Ostforde" in eastern Iceland. See Section 6.6.3.

136 "und allentt watt se in Ißlandtt kopen, fangen, edder verdeell don werden, datt schall all in gemeine bute ghan, und nemandes wes sundeiges darvon upstecken, szo willen ock alle sempttlick tho profite ehrer maschup, ein ider nha sinem vermugen, na vordele, gan stan, unnd trachten, nicht anders dan off ein ider den vordeel vor sick allene hebben scholde". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: *maschup* contract, 8 April 1549 (15490408BRE00).

137 See Section 7.4.2.

138 "Deß schal ock nemandt van ohnen, mit jemande frömdes, so ock mede in Ißlandt segelenn mochte, einige marschuppie hebbenn edder holden, noch heimlich offt apenbar". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: *maschup* contract, 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00).

139 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint of 9 December 1548 (15481209BRE00).SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint of 9 December 1548 (15481209BRE00). See Section 6.2.7.

in Iceland or on board required the consent of the other partners, and the permission of the skipper was needed to bring Icelanders back to Germany.[140]

In the Shetland trade, *maschups* were common forms of enterprises as well.[141] In a minute of the Bremen Lower Court from 1557, two witnesses testify that Hinrick Sprenger had bought the *masschup* in Shetland from his former partner Christoffer Meyer, including the booths and outstanding debts.[142] It is not clear from the document whether other people were involved in the *maschup* as well, but at least Christoffer Meyer had lost his right to trade with the *maschup*'s clients when he sold his share; the bringing of the case before the Lower Court in Bremen implies that Meyer had continued to trade anyway. In 1575, Eler Brede and Ladewich Wickboldt testified before the city council that they had sold their (shares in a) *matschuppie* in Shetland, including all outstanding debts, booths, and boats, three years earlier to skipper Johan Schulle and his companions; from this testimony we learn the names of sixteen other partners in the current or previous *matschuppie*.[143] Moreover, in a Shetland tax register in 1601, the term *mascope* is used in reference to landowner Orne Nebebak, which suggests that Shetlanders could be partners in the trading companies as well.[144]

Although there are no *maschup* contracts or disputes recorded in Hamburg, it is likely that most of the North Atlantic trading ventures from there were organised in the same way. The donation register of the confraternity of St Anne regularly lists donations on behalf of the *maschup, frunde* (lit. 'friends', i.e. the shipowners/trading partners) or the *schip undt gudt* ('ship and cargo') in both

140 "ock mit nemande in Ißlandt edder up dem schepe kopslagenn: besondern wolde he der marschup thom bestenn an gemelten örderen, mit jemande frombdes handelen, solcket scholde mit der anderen frunde, so mede segelen, ohrem rade, wethen, willen, unnd fulborde geschehenn, unnd datsulvige denn frunden na gelegenheit tho willigen edder tho verbedenn fryg stahn. Imgelicken schole nemandt der frunde, so mede segelt, jemande van den Ißlandernn uthe dem lande fuhrenn edder fordernn, sonder dar jemandt des bogerde, de schole sick derwegen der marschup thom bestenn, mit dem schipper vordragen". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: *maschup* contract, 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00).

141 Friedland, "Shetlandhandel", 73, misinterprets the lists from the donation registers of the Hamburg confraternity as recording the partners of a *maschup*, including the cook and ship's boy. There is, however, no reason to assume that all persons on board were members of the company. More probably, the *maschups* in the Shetland trade resembled those in Iceland, so that the skipper and merchants were partners, but the majority of the crew members were not. Moreover, many merchants in the *maschup* must have stayed at home and do therefore not appear in the donation register.

142 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 108 (15570514BRE00).

143 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: witness account of 4 May 1575 (15750504BRE00).

144 *SD 1580–1611*, no. 327.

Iceland and Shetland.[145] This probably means that the regular donations were made from the merchant's, skipper's, or crew member's own capital, whereas the *maschup* donations were made from the commodities traded on behalf of the company, possibly including those partners who did not sail north themselves. There are some references to *maschups* in Hamburg: for example, in 1597 Herman Beverborch complained that the heirs of Bernd Salefeld did not allow him to acquire the promised share in their *mascopey* after Salefeld's death.[146]

Beverborch's case shows the difficulties that young merchants encountered when they wanted to acquire their own positions as senior merchants in a *maschup*. Beverborch claimed that he had sailed to Iceland the previous 21 years, and he is indeed recorded in the donation register in Bernd Salefeld's service from 1577 onwards. In the last years before Salefeld's death in 1596, he is the most generous donor after Bernd Salefeld senior and junior, so he must have acquired considerable status, and it is not difficult to understand his disappointment when he was not permitted to become a partner in the *maschup*. This example also shows that it is not possible to reconstruct the memberships of the Hamburg *maschups* from the entries in the donation register, as the amounts Beverborch donated would suggest that he was already a full *maschup* partner. For Beverborch, this rejection was not the end of his career. He seems to have partnered with Jasper van Doren and Johan Harvest, sailing to Hólmur (1598–1599) and Grundarfjörður (1600–1602), although it is not known whether he was ever part of the *maschup*.[147] The *maschups* therefore also had the function of controlling who was involved in the North Atlantic trade, especially in combination with the licence system.

Once again, for the Faroese trade the sources remain largely silent, but it is unlikely that the situation would have been radically different there. In some cases the term used for Faroese trading companies in the sources hints at this: a document from 1548 grants preferential treatment to Thomas Koppen "and his *madskaff*" in the Faroes, and the 1586 monopoly for Joachim Wichman and Oluf Matzen refers to their partnership as *madschaby*.[148]

145 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00).

146 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): 15 January 1597 (15970115HAM00).

147 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00).

148 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, nos. 58, 187 (after RAK Danske Kancelli – Tegnelser over alle Lande II, ff. 243v–244r: "hand oc hans madskaff" and RAK NR I, ff. 535r-536v).

7.2.2 Shipowners

As we have seen, *maschup* partners often owned all or part of a ship. The *maschups* in the North Atlantic therefore possessed some characteristics of the *Partenreederei*, a much older type of shipping company. In this system, the ownership of a ship was divided between multiple persons (sometimes many). The benefits were that it spread the risks of seafaring, in distributing capital across multiple ships, and it allowed merchants with limited capital to partake in shipowning.[149] As the ship was the means of transportation for the company's trade, it was part of the company's capital, and therefore the *maschup* partners were also part shipowners. We can see this clearly in the Oldenburg examples discussed above, where a ship was acquired by the *maschup*, and shares in the ship were bought and sold by those wanting to join or leave the company.

Christina Deggim's analysis of ship ownership in Hamburg in the thirteenth to the seventeenth century shows that the organisation of part shipownership varied significantly from case to case, with some persons owning an entire ship and others having many small shares of different ships, and that there was a lively trade in these ship shares. Also, it appears skippers were part shipowners as well in only a minority of the contracts.[150] It is not clear whether the same held true in the North Atlantic trade. Deggim also notes that from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, the city council prohibited non-citizens from being part shipowners in Hamburg, though this statute was apparently ignored at times.[151] It is for example known that Luder Ottersen from Lübeck owned a majority share in various Hamburg ships sailing to Iceland in the 1590s.[152]

Another way that part shipownership spread the risk was the distribution of cargo among several ships. This reduced the risk of losing a great deal of capital

149 Ebel, *Lübisches Kaufmannsrecht*, 98–102; Götz Landwehr, "Partenreederei", *Lexikon Des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1993); Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 197.

150 Deggim, *Hafenleben*, 192.

151 Deggim, 190. She cites the example of Konráð Jónsson, an Icelander who settled under the name of Conradt Johansen in Hamburg and had a share in the Iceland trade in 1598 before he acquired citizenship in 1603. It should be noted that there is no evidence to support the claim that Johansen owned a share in a ship, although it is not unlikely. Deggim cites Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 76, 329, who names no source, probably assuming this from the confraternity's donation register, although the type of information in the register does not allow such specific conclusions. Johansen is known to have partnered from 1580 onwards with Hamburg merchants, so his having been a formal partner in a *maschup*, which often included part shipownership, is possible. See Section 4.3.6.

152 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 358–359. See Section 7.2.6.

in the case of shipwreck or piracy,[153] though in the North Atlantic trade, there are only a few clear instances of this. For example, Bremen councillor Hinrick Salomon owned cargo space in the ships of Heine Ratke and Johan Munsterman in 1570, both sailing to Iceland (probably the harbours Nesvogur and Kumbaravogur),[154] and in 1582, his name appears in connection with the Bremen merchants in Nesvogur as well as Berufjörður.[155] Some entries in the donation register of the Hamburg confraternity hint at this practice as well: Hans Frese, for example, donated fish from the ships of Hans Kemmer and Hans Tinsdal in 1572, and of Joachim Valeman and Herman van Schuren (probably both from Hafnarfjörður) in 1583, although it is possible that "Hans Frese" refers to two persons with the same name. Jurgen Vilter made donations from ships from Eyjafjörður and Skagaströnd in 1601,[156] and in 1586, Bartelt Moller and Daniel Elers donated fish from the ships of Harmen Cordes and Gise Lammers in the Faroes. It is explicitly mentioned that the donation on Cordes's ship was made from the commodities that they had freighted together with Joachim Wichman on his ship. On the other ship they also made donations on their own account.[157]

However, in most cases merchants are associated with just one ship per year, so the practice of dividing commodities over various ships seems to have been limited in the North Atlantic trade. There are three related explanations for this: first, a limited number of ships sailed north, whereby usually only one ship visited a certain harbour, making it in many cases difficult or impossible to divide the cargo for one destination over multiple ships. Not coincidentally, the examples of Frese, Moller, and Elers in Hafnarfjörður and the Faroes are from years when two ships were sailing there, and the harbours Eyjafjörður and Skagaströnd are close to each other. Second, most merchants active in the North Atlantic trade might have lacked the capital to own shares in multiple ships, and the practice was therefore limited to capital-rich merchants such as Hinrick Salomon. Third, since a ship was owned by the *maschup* partners, the company's commodities were freighted on board, especially when the *maschup*

153 Ebel, *Lübisches Kaufmannsrecht*, 98–102; Landwehr, "Partenreederei"; Jahnke, "Schiffer und Kaufmann".

154 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 36. See Section 6.3.5.

155 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): Bremen complaints about Hamburg interference, January/February 1582 (15820118BRE00, 15820201BRE00, 15820213BRE00).

156 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 439v.

157 "Daniel Elers und Bartoldt Moller in namen und van wegen ehres principalen Joachim Wichman und vor ehre persone hebben van den guderen so se in Harmen Cordes schepe gehadt den armen gegeven – 2 wage Pferisch(en) f(isch)". SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 317v.

contract included a clause that prohibited partners from holding shares in another *maschup*s trading in Iceland.

7.2.3 The role of the skipper

The skipper had a special role in the *maschup*: in both Bremen contracts, it is specified that even though all partners were part shipowners, they were to subordinate themselves to the command of the skipper, and behave "like other ordinary sailors, who do not own a part of the ship" during the voyage.[158] Moreover, the skipper had the exclusive right to expel merchants from the *maschup*, pay them for their share, and invite others in their place. This clause is why these particular documents still exist, as in 1574 a dispute broke out between the partners. Skipper Bernd Losekanne claimed that three partners had mutinied against him, after which he had tried to expel them from the company, but was prevented by the others from doing so. Thereupon Losekanne decided to leave the *maschup* himself, acquire a new ship, and start a new company, after which the dispute shifted to the question of which company had the right to use the licence for the harbour.[159] The mediation clauses built into the contracts did not work in this case,[160] and the matter was brought before the city council, with copies of the contracts having been made to be used as evidence.

Ruth Prange attributes the existence of these clauses granting ultimate authority to the skipper to the "primitive natural and economic circumstances in Iceland".[161] However, this was nothing exceptional: the dangerous nature of seafaring required that the captain make quick decisions on the basis of his technical knowledge and that his orders be carried out without question. European maritime law therefore acknowledged the skipper's right to command the ship as he saw fit during the voyage, although consent of others was required in some cases, usually involving the loss of goods.[162] The power of the skipper to expel other members from the *maschup* at any time could also be

158 "szo hedden se doch nicht anderst, dan alße andere schlichtte boselude, de noch pardtt edder deel an den schepen plegen tho hebbenn, umme eine benomede hure, sick tho dem schippere, mitt ohme tho segelen vorplichtett". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: *maschup* contract, 8 April 1549 (15490408BRE00).

159 See Section 6.6.3.

160 See Section 7.3.

161 Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 41.

162 Holterman, "Ship Crews"; Landwehr, *Seerecht der Hanse*, 108–110; Klaus Friedland, "Schiff und Besatzung: Seemännische Berufsgemeinschaften im spätmittelalterlichen Nordeuropa", in *Mensch und Seefahrt zur Hansezeit*, by Klaus Friedland, ed. Antjekathrin Graßmann, Rolf

attributed to his function: if animosity or other personal problems between a *maschup* partner and the skipper flared up outside of the trading season, problems might come up during the voyage, undermining the skipper's authority and endangering the enterprise.

In the North Atlantic trade, the skipper seems to have been the central figure of the *maschup* in many cases. Licences were often issued in his name, which led in the case of Bernd Losekanne to problems when he left the *maschup* and started sailing with a new ship to the same harbour. The Bremen city council eventually decided that the licence should have been interpreted as belonging to the *maschup* instead of Losekanne as an individual, who had only been the operational head of the company, and a request was sent to the Danish king that the name on the licence be changed to Christoffer Meyer.[163] The same reasoning lay behind the request of the Count of Oldenburg that Joachim Kolling's licence for Kumbaravogur be re-issued in the count's name, after Kolling had been removed from the company.[164] The same pattern is evident in Hamburg, with skippers' names often appearing on licences. Skippers often sailed to the same harbour for many years in a row, especially those sailing to Hafnarfjörður, where the *maschups* must have consisted of many people, if one can take the boarding lists of these ships in the donation register of the confraternity of St Anne as an indication.[165] Moreover, skippers were often counted among the merchants instead of among the crew, and usually invested much larger amounts of money than did crew members and servants of the merchants, sums that were comparable to what leading merchants contributed (twelve to fifteen fish or more).

However, it does not always seem to have been the case that the skipper played a central role in the trading enterprises. Indeed, there are quite a few sources that point to the practices of hiring skippers and leasing space on ships in the North Atlantic trade. We have already seen how Joachim Kolling from Hooksiel tried to hire Bremen skipper Roleff Gerdes to sail for him to Iceland, which was prohibited by the city council. Gerdes was not a partner in the Oldenburg company headed by Kolling, and thus was neither part shipowner nor merchant.[166] Gerdes also appears in a 1577 complaint by Hamburg merchant

Hammel-Kiesow, and Hans-Dieter Loose, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte NF 42 (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar, 1995), 259; Ebel, *Lübisches Kaufmannsrecht*, 102.

163 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: verdict of the city council, 25 May 1575 (15750325BRE00). See Section 6.6.3.

164 See Section 7.2.1.

165 See Section 6.2.6.

166 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint from Kolling, 6 April 1580 (15800406OLD00). See Section 7.2.1.

Jurgen Thim, who claimed that he had chartered Gerdes to sail with his ship, "a holk of 60 lasts and seven years old", from the Elbe to Iceland for him, but the latter never appeared with his ship in Hamburg.[167] Moreover, the document mentions Thim's 'shipowners in Kiel' (*minenn redern thom Kile*), but as Gerdes seems to have been the owner of the ship, it is possible that Thim meant his trading partners with the term *reder*, who had provided the capital to freight Gerdes's ship.

In August 1584, Prince-Archbishop Henry III of Bremen chartered Bremen skipper and merchant Bruning Nagel to sail for him to Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður in Iceland, for which Henry had been granted a licence.[168] Here the arrangement is even more unclear: it is not known who owned the ship, who provided the capital for freighting, and whether Nagel shared in the profits (after all, he was also the merchant and had to freight the ship) or was only hired by Henry. It is possible that Nagel had originally conceived of the venture as his own, and had had to approach Henry in order to acquire a licence, as Joachim Kolling had done with the support of the Count of Oldenburg some years before, but it is impossible to prove this. In any case, Nagel came into conflict with Christoffer Meyer and Johan Koster, who had traded in the harbours in the years prior. The Bremen council, which could not revoke the licence, therefore decided that the three men would share it, whereby Nagel would receive a sixth part of the ship and they would buy a bigger one the following year.[169]

A comparison of the donation register of St Anne with the issued licences seems to indicate that the practice of hiring skippers or chartering ships was quite widespread in Hamburg. For example, Hans Gronewold, who had a licence for the harbour Ríf in Iceland (*c*. 1566–*c*. 1575), was sailing on ships with a different skipper almost every year, which suggests that Gronewold's *maschup* hired the skippers.[170] The same goes for example for the merchants Hans von Kleve (licensed for Barðaströnd), Ambrosius Loring (licensed for Arnarstapi), and Roleff Eys (licensed for Ísafjörður) in the 1580s and 1590s. Some of the skippers mentioned in the donation register appear only a few times, such as Mattheus Wulveken (1592), Clawes Schoff (1587), Samuel Lange (1581–1582) and Peter

167 "ein hollich vann sostich lastenn unnd 7 jar alt wesennde". SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint from Jurgen Thim, 19 March 1577 (15770319HAM00).

168 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: declaration of Henry III, 10 August 1584 (15840810BRV00).

169 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: verdict of the city council, 3 February 1585 (15850203BRE00). See also Sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.6.

170 See Section 6.3.3.

Wirckes (1569–1570), to name but a few, which indicates that they were not regulars in the North Atlantic trade, but were hired by merchants. Other skippers appear more often, but in changing relations to the merchants.

This is also suggested by the frequent mentions of ships from other cities in the donation register. Among others, we find ships from Bremen (1576, 1578, 1582), Buxtehude (1581), and Lübeck (1584, 1597) with Hamburg merchants on board. A case heard by the Imperial Court in 1553, in which English merchant Thomas Daye complained about Hamburg merchants Jacob Schapeskop and Brandt Schmidt having not fulfilled their promise to deliver fish for him from Shetland to London, sheds a little more light on such arrangements. The skipper in this case was Laurens Winckelman from Rostock. Six other men from Rostock are listed, among others burgomaster Thomas Gerdes and councillor Heinrich Dose, as his partners (*Schiffsfreunde*). It is not entirely clear if they were only part shipowners, or if they were also active in the Shetland trade; the former is more likely. In this case, the Hamburg merchants would have chartered the ship of Winckelman and his companions to sail to Shetland for them.[171]

Moreover, many names of licence holders either appear in the registers very rarely or do not appear at all. This may be because some of the licence holders were partners of a *maschup* who stayed at home (which will be discussed in the next section), while some others may have hired skippers or chartered ships to sail to the North Atlantic on their behalf, as discussed above. This might have been the case for Lübeck merchant Luder Ottersen, who held multiple licences for different harbours (Eyrarbakki, Hólmur, Barðaströnd, Vopnafjörður) at the same time from 1579 onwards. The majority of the ships sailing to these harbours in the period they were licensed to Ottersen were from Hamburg.[172] Ottersen, however, appears only twice in the donation register, in 1595 and 1597.[173] This might mean that he chartered Hamburg skippers to sail for him, but not necessarily. He could also have acquired shares in Hamburg ships or *maschups*: he had formed a partnership with Bremen merchant Carsten Bake to sail to Hólmur in 1591–1592, for example, although Bake claimed that this had been dictated by governor Lauritz Kruse in Iceland.[174]

171 SAH 211–2, G 21.

172 See Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.7, 6.4.1 and 6.6.1.

173 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), ff. 393v, 405r.

174 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): complaint from Carsten Bake, 31 December 1592 (15921231BRE00); Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE01). See also Section 6.2.7.

Most of the data we have for the practice of hiring skippers or space on ships by merchants in the North Atlantic trade comes from the late sixteenth century, but the practice appears to have gone back to the early days of the North Atlantic trade. One of the first documents relating to the direct trade with Iceland mentions that a merchant hired space on a ship. In 1469, Frederik Leddinghusen from Braunschweig promised to pay skipper Marten Stene from Bremen ten Rhenish guilders per last for shipping thirteen lasts of his and his partners' commodities to Iceland. The ship was to be manned by sixteen men and a boy, and the cargo had to be accompanied by one man for every six lasts. The ship wrecked on the way to Iceland in Shetland, and the men subsequently disputed whether Leddinghusen had to pay the promised money or not.[175]

7.2.4 Seafaring merchants or commissioned trade?

The dispute between Leddinghusen and Stene points to another issue related to the organisation of the North Atlantic trade: the involvement of merchants who did not sail to the North Atlantic themselves but stayed in Germany. It has been suggested that in the North Atlantic trade, merchants accompanied their cargo themselves, as sketched above. However, this characterisation does not account for the merchants who remained at home and who might have had considerable influence, especially in the later sixteenth century.

We have already seen that in the Bremen *maschup* contract from 1572, about half (eight out of fifteen) of the *maschup* partners did not travel to Iceland, and in Oldenburg in 1585 only two out of 29 partners actually travelled to Iceland. Moreover, the Bremen contract shows that some of the people staying home had sailed north before, indicating that travelling North Atlantic merchants could become sedentary merchants in their home towns later in their careers.[176] A similar situation is suggested by the account book of Clawes Monnickhusen in Bremen. It only lists debts in Iceland for the years 1557–1558; the rest of the debts are in Bremen for fish sold from 1562 to 1577. Moreover, two debt declarations from 1578 show that Monnickhusen had borrowed money from Carsten Meyer for freighting his portion of the cargo space on board the ship of Johan Munsterman, indicating that he was still active in the Icelandic trade.[177] The Bremen councillor

175 Hänselmann, "Braunschweiger und Bremer", 168–172.

176 See Section 7.2.1.

177 SAB 7,2051 (15570000BRE00); 2-R.11.ff.: debt declarations, 1578 (15780323BRE00, 15780000BRE00); Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 24, 26–27. See also Section 6.3.5.

Hinrick Salomon, who is not known to have been in Iceland, also owned a share of Munsterman's ship in 1570 (and probably in other years as well).[178]

However, in the absence of other *maschup* contracts, it is quite difficult to estimate the percentage of merchants who were involved in the North Atlantic trade while staying at home. This partially has to do with a source bias, especially in Hamburg: most of the sources are primarily concerned with seafaring, and therefore mainly provide information about those who actually sailed north. One of the main concerns of the confraternity of St Anne was providing social security to seafaring folk, and therefore skippers, crew members, and seafaring merchants dominate its extensive records. We can reasonably assume, for example, that the vast majority of people mentioned in the donation register did sail to the North Atlantic islands. Moreover, the relevant letters and court records in the German and Danish archives are mainly concerned with cases related to seafaring or disputes on the islands. Much rarer are cases about the finances of *maschups* or other disputes that involved the merchants staying at home as well.

A second difficulty is the ambiguous definition of merchant (*kopman, kaufmann*). This could refer to someone solely concerned with the North Atlantic trade and who sailed north himself every year, or to a local retail trader, or to a capital-rich long-distance bulk trader with connections all over Europe, or anyone in between. Moreover, merchants did not always act on their own account: they could be hired as middlemen in the North Atlantic by the capital providers, as is indicated by the contract between Leddinghusen and Stene from 1469. The Oldenburg account book mentions four merchants, Johan Werenborg, Gerdt van Varel, Harmen Kloppenborg, and Dirick Stubbe, who sailed to Iceland in 1585, as well as a cooper and a servant. Of these men, only Gerdt van Varel also owned a share of the ship.[179]

The Oldenburg seafaring merchants were, like the rest of the crew, remunerated for their service in money (*hueir*) as well as in a part of the cargo space of the ship, called *voeringe*, or portage in English. This system reflected the old practice where all persons on the ship were also freighting goods, a system that was gradually abolished over the course of the sixteenth to eighteenth century with the growing specialisation of seafaring, as it complicated the organisation of trade. However, it was still the norm in the period under discussion.[180] The

178 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 36.

179 SAO 262–1, no. 2 (15850307OLD00), pp. 1, 11.

180 Landwehr, *Seerecht der Hanse*, 94–95; Witt, *Master next God?*, 60; W. Woywodt, "Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der hansischen Seeleute vom 14. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert" (PhD thesis, 1957), 14; Deggim, "Seemannsarbeit", 13; Holterman, "Ship Crews"; Brück, "'voringhe' und Kaufmannsgut", 131.

size of the portage was dependent on one's position on board, with the skipper and the leading merchants holding the largest shares, as the Oldenburg account book shows. The combination of wages and the possibility of trading for oneself outside of the *maschup* must have provided sufficient incentive for merchants to expose themselves to the dangers and inconveniences of seafaring.

Since the portage system was not restricted to the merchants, every person on board could bring commodities of their own, which practically made every crew member a petty merchant.[181] Although crew members did sell their portage space to others, it is known that some traded on their own account as well. For example, a list of goods confiscated by the bailiff in Iceland in 1549 from Hamburg vessels includes fish and barrels of flour belonging to two sailors on Cordt Detzelman's ship.[182]

Given these problems, it is difficult to construct an overview of the merchants who did not sail north themselves, although not impossible. By comparing the data from the accounts of the confraternity of St Anne with other evidence, we can get a glimpse of these persons. The first method is to compare the licences issued after 1565 with the donation register to see which of the licensed persons actually sailed to the islands. Of the names mentioned in the known licences for Hamburg merchants, 24 persons can be shown to have been active in Iceland at the time their licences were valid, whereas ten of them were not – although most of this latter group do appear earlier in the register and were thus active in the Icelandic trade before being granted licences. This is for example the case with Cordt Basse, Hans Hering, and Hans Schomaker, who held licences for Þórshöfn from 1589 onwards.[183] In the register, Basse only shows up as a servant in the Faroes in the 1550s, Hering is listed as being in Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík in the 1560s–1580s, and Schomaker in the 1540s–1560s as a servant in Eyrarbakki. Another eight persons sailed to Iceland in the first year of their licences, but are absent in later years.[184] This does not include the people who are known to have died before the terms of their licences ended. Finally, one licence holder (Thomas Koppen for the Faroes) is not mentioned in the donation register at all. The most probable explanation for the absence of these licence holders from the register is that these people conducted their business from home and had others (their *maschup* partners or hired skippers and merchants) sail for them.

181 Brück, "Kooperationen der Schiffer", 181–183.

182 "Andreß van Rypenn einn beßman: Vc fisches; Cordt Bollanndt boeßman: IIII tonnen mels". SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2 (15490000HAM01).

183 See Appendix A and Section 6.5.5.

184 These were Barteld Elers, Hans Jaspers, Ambrosius Loring, Bernd Osthoff, Hans Steinkamp, Cordt Tacke, Joachim Thim, and Joachim Wichman. See Appendix C.

A second method is to trace the eldermen, *Schaffer*, and treasurers of the confraternity of St Anne in the donation register. Of the 33 persons who were elderman from 1533 to 1628 (the time span of the first donation register), only three sailed north themselves while they were elderman (Hans Berman, Hans Elers, and Alert Heihusen), and another four were active in the North Atlantic at least part of this time (Wichman Berman, Berndt Lininck, Helmeke Wittenborch, and Hans Kopman, whereby the latter had to give up the trade because of the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly).[185] This means that only about a quarter of the eldermen were actually actively trading themselves. The rest must have stayed in Hamburg, and it is likely that at least some of them remained active in the North Atlantic trade by providing capital, given their continued involvement in the confraternity. In the same way, the offices of treasurer and *Schaffer* were often held after a person had ceased trading actively in the north.

Although it is impossible to give exact numbers, in combination with the evidence from Oldenburg and Bremen these figures suggest that roughly a third to a half of the merchants involved in the North Atlantic business actually stayed at home, so that the image of the old-fashioned seafaring North Atlantic merchant must be seen as an oversimplication. Moreover, other mercantile arrangements were used alongside the *maschup*, in which merchants were chartering ships or hiring skippers and/or other merchants to sail for them, which further complicates the picture.

However, it is difficult to estimate the degree of involvement of sedentary long-distance traders who had business concerns in other regions of the Hanseatic trade network in the North Atlantic trade. Gerd Steinbrinker suggests that these *Großkaufleute* might be found among those who were also members of the society of England merchants, as these would be likely to have business interests or connections in England as well.[186] Although there is something to be said for this hypothesis, and one could extend it to include the members of the society of Scania merchants, a comparison of those persons who were members of merchant societies does not yield a clear division.[187] For example, we do indeed find Hans Schomaker, who had a licence for Þórshöfn and Vopnafjörður in the 1590s but did not sail there himself, in the society of Scania merchants. This would suggest that he had connections in both the North Atlantic and in Denmark. On the other hand, there are also merchants like Hans and Matthias

185 See Appendix C.
186 Steinbrinker, "Fahrergesellschaften", 115.
187 See Appendix C.

Eggers, who were personally active in Iceland while they were members of the England and Scania merchant societies, respectively.

For the traders with Shetland, the situation is even harder to assess. For the years 1644–1646, Martin Reißmann has shown that of 21 Hamburg merchants in Shetland, eleven were skippers, and assumes that most of the other merchants would also have sailed, hiring skippers and ships for their Shetlandic business.[188] For the sixteenth century, there are only few data available. Shetland merchants very rarely served as officers in the confraternity of St Anne in Hamburg before the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly. The only Shetland merchant who became elderman before 1601, Helmeke Wittenborch (1543–1561), can be shown to have been in Shetland at least in some years of his term as elderman: in 1547, 1548, and 1555.[189] In Bremen, where there are more qualitative sources available for the sixteenth-century Shetland trade, the trade seems to have been dominated by a few families who were mainly sailing themselves. The Shetland trade may therefore more reasonably be characterised as "antiquated" than the other branches of the North Atlantic trade.[190]

7.2.5 Factors and Danish merchants

Ehrenberg has drawn attention to the mention in the donation register of "der erbar und vornehme" ('the honourable and noble') Joachim Wichman in 1587–1592, and he appears in 1586 as principal for Hamburg merchants Daniel Elers and Bartelt Moller in the Faroes.[191] Wichman, the only person in the register referred to with this title, was a prominent long-distance trader in Hamburg in that period. He was a salt factor for the Holy Roman Emperor in 1575; was active in trade with the Iberian peninsula, southern Germany,[192] and Danzig (Gdańsk); and he partnered with his brothers Peter in Antwerp and Hinrich, a London factor for Hamburg merchant Hieronymus Reise in the 1560s.[193] Moreover, Joachim was elderman of the Flanders merchants in Hamburg and in 1578 of the common merchants.[194] According to Ehrenberg,

188 Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 72–73.
189 See Appendix C.
190 Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 71.
191 Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 42n1. See footnote 157.
192 Hermann Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- und Spanienhandel 1590–1625* (Hamburg, 1954), 142–144.
193 SAH 211–2, R 33, vol. 2.
194 SAH 612-2/1, 1, p. 13.

bulk traders like Wichman had become rare in the North Atlantic trade in the late sixteenth century, as he reports encountering more known names earlier in the register (but fails to mention these).[195]

As mentioned above, it is difficult to confirm Ehrenberg's claim, as the great long-distance traders often operated in the background and do not appear in the donation register. However, Wichman is also an exemplar of another phenomenon, which is the growing Danish influence in the Icelandic and Faroese trade in the second half of the sixteenth century.[196] Wichman received a licence for Hafnarfjörður in 1566, at a time when the access to Icelandic harbours was limited for Hamburg merchants by the Danish crown, and around the same time was a factor for Stefan Loitz from Stettin, who had received the monopoly for the Icelandic sulphur trade from Frederick II.[197] Two years later, he did business with Christof Vogler, the scribe of Segeberg castle, who had a licence for Dýrafjörður.[198] In 1586, he received the monopoly for trade and tax collection on the Faroes together with the Copenhagen councillor Oluf Matzen, with whom he was in a *madschaby*, and where he did sail himself this time.[199]

While acting as a factor for Stefan Loitz and probably the Danish court, Wichman also employed factors in the Faroes himself, as is indicated by the use of the term *principal* by Elers and Moller in 1586. The use of factors, or agents of a merchant (company) in a foreign country or town, was a relatively late development in the Hanseatic trade, which relied for a long time on cooperation between merchants as equals in the *wedderlegginge* or *mascopey*, as sketched above. However, in reaction to structural changes in the European economy in the course of the sixteenth century, factors begin to appear in the Hanseatic area.[200] The use of factors in the North Atlantic trade, either for one-time transactions, as might be suspected in the case of Elers and Moller, or on a longer-term basis, might have been relatively widespread. However, in most cases there is too little evidence to assess the precise relations between factors

195 Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte", 24n1.

196 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 6 October 1566 (15661006HAM00). See also Section 3.5.4.

197 *DI* 14:329 (15660303FRE00); SAH 211–2, W 21. See Section 3.5.3.

198 SAH 211–2, R 33, vol. 2. See Section 6.4.2.

199 Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu*, no. 187. On Wichman's presence in the Faroes, see Section 3.6.

200 Jahnke, "Strukturen von gestern", 113–114; see for example Pierre Jeannin, "Lübecker Handelsunternehmungen um die Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 43 (1963): 40.

and merchants. Moreover, lords regularly employed factors in foreign places to provide their courts with necessary supplies. A Danish factor in Lübeck is known from the times of Christian III, and Frederick II also had factors in Hamburg, Amsterdam, Emden, Rostock, and Danzig.[201]

Wichman was one of a limited number of merchants known to have cooperated closely with Danish merchants or to have been active as Danish factors in Hamburg or Lübeck. These merchants appear often on licences for various harbours in Iceland and in the Faroes, similar to Danish merchants like Marcus Hess, burgomaster of Copenhagen and one of the richest merchants of that city at the time,[202] who received licences for various harbours in Iceland from 1566 to *c*. 1580.[203] Indeed, there are good reasons to assume that all Hamburg and Lübeck merchants who received licences for Icelandic harbours in 1566 were working for the Danish court in some way, either as factors or via partnerships with Danish royal merchants, as part of Danish attempts to gain greater control over the Icelandic trade.[204] Like Wichman, Joachim Thim, a Hamburg merchant who received a licence for Keflavík in 1566, later held the Faroese trade monopoly as a joint venture with Danish merchants.[205] Around the same time, Thim was a Danish factor in Hamburg, among others active in the trade in horses.[206] Moreover, Lübeck burgomaster Bartholomeus Tinappel, licence holder for Dýrafjörður in 1566, was a commander in the Danish fleet in the war against Sweden and engaged in business ventures with Johan Jellesen Falckner, the Danish royal merchant in Amsterdam, who was supplying the Danish war fleet. Both were ordered by Frederick II to build a factory for the extraction of Icelandic *koberøg* (vitriol or copper(II) sulphate), a substance used in medicine, in Amsterdam in 1563.[207] Falckner also held licences for Eyrarbakki in Iceland from 1567, from where he was ordered to fetch sulphur, which was sold in Antwerp as payment for a load of gunpowder.[208] He might have commissioned Hamburg merchants to trade there for him, as the donation register of the confraternity hints at this.[209]

201 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 356.
202 On Marcus Hess, see Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 221; Wittendorff, *På Guds og herskabs nåde*, 287–289.
203 See Appendix A.
204 See Sections 3.5.2 and 3.5.4.
205 See Section 3.6.
206 SAH 211–2, T 22.
207 *DI* 14:77.
208 *DI* 14:415.
209 See Section 6.2.1.

Finally, the Icelandic enterprise of Hans Nielsen, the Danish merchant commissioned with the royal trade in Icelandic sulphur from 1561 onwards, leaned heavily on the German networks. The register of expenses of the royal treasurer for the year 1561 shows that many of the commodities purchased by Nielsen to fit out the ship headed to Iceland were bought in Hamburg, Lübeck, Stralsund, and Rostock. Moreover, a crew from Hamburg led by skipper Gerth Kopken was hired to sail the ship.[210] Kopken did have experience in sailing to Iceland: he is attested in the Hamburg donation register from 1542 onwards, first as a servant or crew member on various ships and in 1558 as a shipmaster.[211] Herman Oldenseel, the Lübeck merchant holding the licence for Vopnafjörður, is known to have supplied cargo for Hans Nielsen's ship in 1568,[212] and a letter from 1578 states that two other Lübeck merchants had lent Nielsen money for his Icelandic enterprise as well.[213]

In a certain way, the Faroes can be regarded as the testing ground for Danish policies regarding the North Atlantic trade, which would later be put into practice first in the Vestmannaeyjar[214] and later in the rest of Iceland. After all, both Joachim Wullenwever and Thomas Koppen, who held the Faroese monopoly from *c*. 1520 onwards, had Danish connections. Although there is no evidence for direct trade relations of both men with Denmark, It is likely Wullenwever served the Danish king in the 1520s, and Koppen is explicitly mentioned as having been royal scribe in the records relating to his enfeoffment with the Faroes in 1529.[215] Some decades later Johan Jellesen Falckner was ordered by Frederick II in 1565 and 1566 to fetch fish from the Faroes, which would be provided by the royal merchant Andres Jude there,[216] that would probably serve as provisions for the Danish navy, in line with Falckner's activities in Iceland.

7.2.6 Case study: the network of Luder Ottersen

It is worth exploring the involvement of royal Danish factors a bit further through the example of Lübeck citizen Luder Ottersen, whose commercial activities have

210 *DI* 13:511.
211 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00). See the overview of the donation register online: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-016
212 *KB* 1566–1570, 313; *DI* 15:67.
213 *KB* 1576–1579, 487.
214 See Section 6.1.
215 See Section 3.6.
216 *KB* 1561–1565, 646; *KB* 1566–1570, 65.

been thoroughly analysed by Pierre Jeannin.[217] Ottersen's involvement in the Icelandic trade and his wide network show the close relations between merchants from all towns involved in the North Atlantic trade in the late sixteenth century, as well as those merchants' connections to Danish merchants and the Danish court, which remain hidden in other sources. Moreover, it is unlikely that any other individual merchant had a bigger influence on the North Atlantic trade in the late sixteenth century than Ottersen.

Luder Ottersen possessed several licences for Icelandic harbours from 1578 onwards until the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly: he is connected to Eyrarbakki, Hólmur, Barðaströnd, and Vopnafjörður at various times.[218] However, a legal case from 1570 shows that he was already an established name in the Icelandic trade by then. In November of that year, he had to appear before the English Privy Council after complaints of English fishermen that Ottersen was interfering in their business in Iceland. Ottersen stated that he had only acted on the orders of his master the king of Denmark, but the lords were not happy with that, and he had to promise to allow the English to trade freely in Iceland and other Danish dominions, or else he could not trade in England himself or through his factors.[219]

It is not clear what Ottersen had done to provoke the anger of the English, but it is remarkable that he is mentioned as acting on behalf of the Danish king at this time, since he would not become the royal Danish factor in Lübeck officially until 1590.[220] Neither is it known in which role he was active in Iceland and in which harbour, as the case is not discussed in any other source pertaining to the Icelandic trade. However, in 1574 he is known to have been part owner of a ship to Iceland returning via England as well as his fellow Lübeck citizen Herman Oldenseel, who had been granted the licence for Vopnafjörður in 1566 and who also partnered with Danish merchants, as mentioned above.[221] Oldenseel would freight a Bremen ship to Iceland in 1577 or 1578, which was attacked by English pirates, together with another Lübeck citizen, Hans Elmenhorst.[222] Elmenhorst (also known as Hans (van) Delmenhorst in other sources) received a prolongation of his licence for Hólmur in 1586, where he

217 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen".

218 See Appendix A.

219 Dasent, *Acts of the Privy Council*, 399–400; Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 357–358.

220 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 356.

221 Jeannin, 358.

222 Arthur John Butler, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth*, vol. 16 (London, 1909), 428–429, no. 577. For the many documents pertaining to this case, see Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 373n13.

had probably been active since *c*. 1550.[223] These three men can be considered the core of the (or maybe even the entire) community of Lübeck merchants who traded with Iceland in the late sixteenth century, and it is likely that Ottersen and Delmenhorst cooperated closely as well. It is known that Delmenhorst's widow Anna sold his booth in the harbour of Hólmur to Ottersen in 1593.[224]

Moreover, these three merchants had strong connections with the communities of Iceland merchants in Bremen and Hamburg. Oldenseel is named as Herman Oldenstehe in a 1567 complaint from Bremen merchants about his interference in their business in eastern Iceland, where it is claimed that he was a son of a Bremen citizen who had moved to Lübeck. Apparently he had wanted to acquire an eighth share of a ship in Bremen, but was not allowed to do so.[225] He might be the same person who is mentioned in 1548 as Herman Oldensehe/Oldensche, who had invited a man from Lübeck – possibly Hans Delmenhorst – to sail with him to Hólmur.[226] Although these documents would suggest that he had a bad reputation in his former home town, his use of a Bremen ship in 1577 suggests the opposite. Delmenhorst appears in the donation register of the Hamburg confraternity often in the 1570s and 1580s, suggesting that he partnered with Hamburg merchants, more specifically Herman Ketzeler.

Ottersen himself had close connections with the Bremen and Hamburg merchants sailing to Iceland. Jeannin has analysed sea passes for the Øresund, which show that between 1574 and 1580, Ottersen often chartered Bremen ships to sail to Iceland, as well as sending Lübeck ships of which he was part owner. After 1590, he is known to have owned three-fourths or five-eighths of ships, with the remaining portions being owned by Hamburg merchants Jasper van Doren and his brothers Hans and Heinrich, Herman Wegener, or Barteld Elers.[227] With Wegener, who appears in the donation register of St Anne from the 1550s to 1595, he traded in Eyrarbakki, which was licensed to Ottersen in 1578, 1591–1593, and 1590–1600, and to Wegener in 1586–1589.[228] Jasper van Doren probably was Ottersen's partner in Hólmur, as they shared the licence for the harbour in 1599–1601, and he is attested there in the donation register from 1592 onwards. Barteld Elers held licences for Ísafjörður from 1586 onwards, and is

223 See Section 6.2.7.

224 AHL Niederstadtbuch 24-9-1593; Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 359. See Section 5.4.

225 RAK 25 (Suppl. II, 15): Bremen answer to complaint of Heinrich Mumme, 28 February 1567 (15670228BRE00).

226 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaint of 9 December 1548 (15481209BRE00). See also Section 6.2.7.

227 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 358–359.

228 See Section 6.2.1.

attested in the donation register until 1594. If we assume that Ottersen also traded in Barðaströnd and Vopnafjörður, for which he held licences at some point but which were nonetheless visited by Hamburg skippers and merchants, Ottersen had a presence in a third (five out of fifteen) of the Icelandic harbours frequented by Hamburg merchants. It is possible he traded in even more harbours, if we take into account that the Øresund passes, which Jeannin analysed, do not show the ships leaving from and returning to Hamburg. Ottersen himself only shows up in the donation register thrice: in 1595 with the staggering donation of 300 mark (where donations of one or two mark were usual for the chief merchants), and in 1596 and 1597 with small donations on the ships to Hólmur.[229]

Ottersen's connections with Bremen are visible in a short-lived *maschup* formed with Carsten Bake, against the will of the latter, in Hólmur in 1590.[230] After this arrangement had ended, a certain Johan Vogt, the servant (*diener*) of Ottersen, requested a licence for Hólmur on behalf of his principal in 1593.[231] A Bremen merchant named Johan Vogit, probably the same person, received a licence for Flatey in 1598, where he might have operated for Ottersen as well.[232]

Moreover, Ottersen even appears to have had a connection to the Oldenburg enterprise in the Icelandic trade. Correspondence from 1583 between the Bremen city council and Johan Bockholt, the governor of Iceland, mentions that Joachim Kolling had borrowed money from Ottersen to set up his trading company in 1579 and had appointed his Bremen brother-in-law Roleff Gerdes as warrantor. When Kolling could not repay the loan four years later, Gerdes claimed that Hans Vos and Joachim Meinsen from Hamburg had been appointed as Kolling's new warrantors in Iceland and that he was therefore not liable for the debt. This story was confirmed by Bockholt.[233] Given the situation sketched above, it is not hard to imagine why Kolling borrowed money from Ottersen, who must have been one of the most capital-rich merchants in the Icelandic trade. On the other hand, Ottersen must have known either Kolling or Gerdes well, otherwise he would not have entrusted his money to the former.

229 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), ff. 393v, 398r, 405r.
230 See Section 6.2.7.
231 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15930000XXX00).
232 See Section 6.3.7.
233 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: request to Bockholt, 23 March (15830323BRE00) and confirmation, 17 April 1583 (15830417KOB00).
234 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 357.

Ottersen had good connections in Denmark as well. He may have originally been from Malmö,[234] and besides being the Danish royal factor in Lübeck after 1590, he is known to have partnered with Danish merchants in the North Atlantic trade. In 1578, he was granted the licence for Eyrarbakki together with Jørgen Kydt, a merchant from Copenhagen, who would later trade in the Vestmannaeyjar and the Faroes as a royal merchant.[235] Moreover, Ottersen is known to have freighted the Bremen ship of skipper Hinrich Witting in 1577 together with Copenhagen burgomaster Marcus Hess; the following year, Ottersen and Hess shared ownership of a ship that left from Hamburg.[236] These ships must have sailed to Hafnarfjörður, for which Hess had a licence at the time.[237] And last but not least, Ottersen was married to the daughter of Simon Surbeck, the Copenhagen burgomaster who held the licence for the Vestmannaeyjar for two decades.[238]

The Icelandic part of Ottersen's network, which has been visualised in Figure 7.2, is an example of the many interconnections and often-complex relations between the merchants active in the North Atlantic trade, and shows that the North Atlantic trade was not strictly divided between the involved cities. Indeed, Danish merchants were an integral part of this network. Moreover, the appearance of Ottersen in the North Atlantic trade shows that the commercial activity of at least some merchants in the North Atlantic trade was not limited to that region. Ottersen's activities included England as well, as noted above, and after 1590 until his death in 1613, he had numerous enterprises in the Netherlands, the Iberian peninsula, Italy, Norway, and Russia.[239] Of course, the typical North Atlantic merchant likely did not have as many ties across the trade; Ottersen seems to have been an exceptional figure in this context. However, it can be assumed that the multi-faceted connections between merchants from various places and the many forms these could take were – on a smaller scale – characteristic of the North Atlantic trade in the late sixteenth century.

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235 See Appendix A.

236 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 359, 373n15.

237 *KB* 1576–1579, 15–16.

238 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 358. See also Section 4.3.5.

239 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 359–372; Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 358.

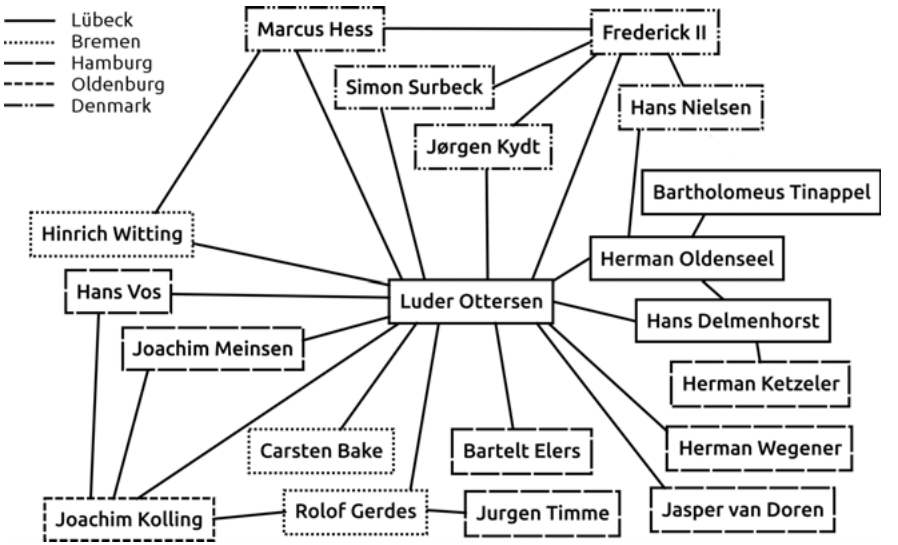

Figure 7.2: The "Icelandic network" of Luder Ottersen in the late sixteenth century.

7.3 Conflict resolution

A final topic that should be addressed in the analysis of the organising structures and institutions in the North Atlantic trade are the methods used to settle disputes between merchants. The methods to which North Atlantic merchants could resort in the case of problems with their North Atlantic clients or others on the islands and the importance of personal networks for conflict prevention have been analysed above.[240] However, it also happened regularly that merchants came into conflict with each other, not only those from different cities, but also merchants from the same city. These conflicts often revolved around the use of a certain harbour. In Ríf in Iceland, for example, we know that Hans Hase from Hamburg requested a licence in 1589 for the harbour at which his fellow citizen Bernd Salefeld was already trading, under the pretext that two ships could use the harbour. Salefeld, however, did not agree with this, and Hase's licence was revoked.[241] Then after Salefeld died, Herman Beverborch,

240 See Section 4.4.

241 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): request, 6 December 1589 (15891206HAM02); Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25): licence, 29 February 1590 (15900129KOB02).

Bernd Salefeld the Younger, and Joachim Terminau applied for the licence individually.[242]

There was no guarantee of success when applying to the Danish court for a licence, and one's chances were reduced even more when multiple merchants were vying for the licence for one harbour. We can assume, then, that in most cases the communication among the North Atlantic merchants was good enough to prevent this scenario from arising. Organisations like the confraternity of St Anne or the merchant societies were crucial institutions in this regard. In cases where there was the potential for conflict, such as among the remaining partners of a merchant company after the death of one partner, these institutions are known to have acted as mediators between the parties in dispute. It is for example known that the eldermen of the *Schiffergesellschaft* in Lübeck and of the *gemene kopman* in Bremen and Hamburg were empowered to mediate between skippers and merchants.[243]

As we can see from the Bremen *maschup* contracts from 1549 and 1572, the processes for mediation in the case of conflict between partners in the *maschup* were set forth when the company was founded. The specific remedy here was that the skipper was empowered to buy out partners from the *maschup*. Of course this form of resolution could result in further conflict, in which case both parties would have to choose two friends who would mediate for them. If the mediators could not come to an agreement, there was the option to appoint a disinterested *Overmann*, who would adjudicate in the matter.[244] Apparently neither step was successful in preventing the conflict between Bernd Losekanne and Christoffer Meyer from escalating, as the case was brought before the Bremen city council in 1575.[245]

Indeed the city council was the usual institution to go to when the methods of mediation between two conflicting parties were not successful. The 1556–1560 case in which the ship's carpenter Gerdt Breker sought to have his obligation to pay compensation for the manslaughter of captain Cordt Hemeling in Shetland rescinded was brought before the Bremen city council.[246] Moreover, in 1541 the Imperial Lower Court (*Niedergericht*) was instated in Bremen, which heard cases in which the sum in dispute was 200 gold guilders or less.[247] The dispute about the

242 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): request of Joachim Terminau, 24 December 1596 (15961224HAM00); of Herman Beverborch, 15 January 1597 (15970115HAM00).

243 Dünzelmann, "Kaufmannsgilde", 79.

244 Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 41.

245 See Section 7.2.1.

246 *SD 1195–1579*, 73–74. See Sections 4.1.4 and 5.2.

247 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 40.

sale of a *maschup* in Shetland between Christoffer Meyer and Hinrick Sprenger was brought before this court in 1557.[248] Very serious cases could be argued at the Imperial Court (*Reichskammergericht*) in Speyer: one such example involved the compensation for the death of Hamburg merchant Hans Hambrock in Iceland, who had died after another merchant, Hinrich Ratkens had stabbed him during a fight over the unloading of a ship in Hafnarfjörður in 1599. The case was first brought before Hamburg's lower court, then the city's high court, and finally reached the *Reichskammergericht* in 1602.[249]

When merchants from different towns came into conflict, the city councils became involved, with working through diplomatic channels being the first step. For example, in the long-running dispute between Bremen and Hamburg merchants about the right to use the harbour Berufjörður in Iceland in the 1580s and 1590s, many letters were sent between the councils of Bremen and Hamburg, in which both parties explained their points of view.[250] When that did not accomplish much, the council of Bremen solicited the intervention of the archbishop of Bremen, and then of the Icelandic governor Johan Bockholt, who mediated and finally promised to prevent Hamburg merchants from using the harbour in 1583.[251] This measure seems to have helped for some time, but when the conflict erupted again in 1590, the matter was finally brought before the Danish court, the institution issuing the licences around which the conflict revolved.[252]

The situation was more complicated when it involved foreign parties. An example is Gerdt Hemeling from Bremen being forced to rent out his ship in Shetland to the Earl of Bothwell James Hepburn, when the latter was fleeing Scotland in 1567.[253] After Bothwell had arrived in Norway and was captured there by the king's men, Hemeling sought compensation for his ship (which had not been returned to him) through the mediation of the Bremen city council twice, in 1568 and 1573. Although the Danish king answered that Hemeling was welcome to initiate a lawsuit against Bothwell, Hemeling did probably not take this advice, as such a lawsuit would probably have been extremely costly and the outcome

248 *SD* 1195–1579, no. 108 (15570514BRE00).

249 SAH 211–2, H 9; Skúlason, "Hafnarfjörður", 200–201.

250 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: correspondence between Bremen and Hamburg, 1580 (15800123BRE00, 15800130HAM00, 15800218BRE00, 15800229HAM00, 15800310BRE00).

251 SAB 2-R.11.ff., correspondence between Bremen and Johan Bockholt, 1582–1583. (15820324BRE00, 15820406KLI00, 15830131BRE00, 15830200KLI00, 15830210KLI00, 15830228-BRE00, 15830320KLI00).

252 Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 56–57. See Section 6.6.3.

253 See Section 3.7.

was too uncertain.[254] Similarly, the correspondence concerning compensation for Herman Oldenseel and Hans Delmenhorst from Lübeck, whose ship was captured on the return journey from Iceland by English privateers in 1577, dragged on without any resolution being reached until Oldenseel and Delmenhorst stopped pursuing the matter in 1583.[255] Finally, elderman Moritz Zimmerman of the Steelyard, the Hanseatic *Kontor* in London, wrote to the Bremen city council in 1587 that a Bremen ship, captured by English privateers near Shetland while returning from Iceland, had been brought to Chester in England and was now impounded on the Isle of Man. However, he warned that attempts to retrieve it or to be compensated would cost a lot of money and trouble and probably not be worth it.[256]

The involvement of Zimmerman in the Bremen attempts to retrieve a ship show that the Hanseatic network continued to function as an institution of conflict management through the late sixteenth century. Even as late as 1661, Bremen complaints about illegally collected salt customs in Shetland were communicated to the English king through Hanseatic consul Jacob Jacobsen in London, who would translate the complaints into English, discuss the matter with the English authorities, and report back to Bremen.[257] In one of the first documents about the North Atlantic trade, the case between Frederik Leddinghusen from Braunschweig and skipper Marten Stene from Bremen about a ship intended for Iceland which wrecked on Shetland in 1469, we see the Hanse involved in conflict resolution. Stene claimed that Leddinghusen owed him the entire freighting charge, even though he had completed only a part of the voyage. The city council of Braunschweig thereupon consulted the council of Lübeck, from which the response came that in 1447 the Hanseatic Diet had agreed upon a resolution that addressed such matters. The dispute was settled in Leddinghusen's favour.[258]

254 *SD 1195–1579*, 124–125. The correspondence from 1568 and 1573 pertaining to the case is in SAB 2-R.11.kk, SAB 2-W.9.a.1.Bd.1 and RAK TKUA, Speciel Del, Staden Bremen AI, Pakke 29 (15680219BRE00, 15680224BRE00, 15680410FRE00, 15680522BRE00, 15680522BRE00, 15680630FRE00, 15731007BRE00, 15731008BRE00).

255 Jeannin, "Luder Ottersen", 358, 373n13.

256 RAK D 11 Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): letter of Moritz Zimmerman, 29 November 1587 (15871129LON00). For Zimmerman, see Nils Jörn, "Moritz Zimmermann – ein Danziger als Ältermann des Stalhofes (1566–1589) im Spannungsfeld zwischen Ehrenamt und kaufmännischem Erfolg", in *'Kopet uns werk by tyden': Beiträge zur hansischen und preußischen Geschichte : Walter Stark zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Nils Jörn, Detlef Kattinger, and Horst Wernicke (Schwerin, 1999), 181–194.

257 SAB 2-W.9.b.10.: correspondence between Jacob Jacobsen and Bremen, 1661–1662 (16611120BRE00, 16611120BRE01, 16620314LON00).

258 Hänselmann, "Braunschweiger und Bremer", 169.

7.4 The communities of *Islandfahrer*: Actors, social structure, and social position

Aside from the major long-distance merchants, which was analysed above, the bulk of the merchants and skippers active in the North Atlantic trade probably had little commercial interests outside the North Atlantic, even if they arranged their business from their homes. Only a few merchants in the North Atlantic trade are known to have been active in other regions, most commonly Bergen or England. It is very possible that with the loosening of the ties between the Icelandic and the English trade from Hamburg in the 1530s,[259] the involved actors might have come to rely on their North Atlantic ventures more and more. The introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in Iceland, however, forced many of these merchants to seek new business elsewhere, as the appearance of ships to Scotland, Spain, Portugal, France, and Russia in the donation register shows.

When the commercial interests of the merchants in the North Atlantic were threatened, one argument the appeals by them often made was that they had never learnt any trade besides the North Atlantic trade, and so the discontinuation of their trade would condemn them and their wives and children to poverty.[260] Although this is doubtlessly an exaggeration for rhetorical purposes, it is likely that a disruption of the North Atlantic trade would indeed have posed a real problem for a large number of people. Pétur Eiríksson has estimated that during the sixteenth century, about ten to fifteen percent of Hamburg's population was to some extent involved in the Icelandic trade, by comparing the data from the donation register of the confraternity with estimations of the population in Hamburg.[261] Estimations for Bremen do not exist, but it is likely that the North Atlantic trade made a considerable contribution to the livelihood of the city's population. The next section will analyse the social structure of this group and the position they occupied in the German cities.

259 Friedland, "Englandfahrer", 8–18. See also Section 4.1.2.

260 For example RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): Hamburg request for the harbour Ríf, 25 November 1563 (15631125HAM00): "und der kauffman so diese haffe gebrauchet mit diesser narung von kindeßbein auff umbgangen und sunst nit gelehrnet"; Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): Bremen request for Nesvogur and Grundarfjörður, 22 November 1585 (15851122BRE00): "Eß auch in warheit an deme, daß unter denn jetzigen supplicanten etzliche alte betagte leute so nicht viell andere commercien davon sie sich ernehren möchten, alse die eintzige Ißlanderfart halten und treiben, doneben auch arme wittiben und weisen sein, die auff den fall, da ihnen die berurte have uber zuversicht solte abwendig gemacht werden, daruber einß theilß zu eußertes verderb und gleich zum bettelstab gerathen musten."

261 Eiríksson, "Mikilvægi Íslandsverslunarinnar", 2.

For most towns from which merchants traded in the North Atlantic, it is hardly possible to speak about a community of North Atlantic merchants, as there are only a few actors known. Such is the case with Lübeck and Oldenburg, where a handful of people were involved in this trade. Moreover, it is known that Lübeck merchants often chartered ships from Hamburg or Bremen, or sailed from Hamburg to Iceland, as has been described above. The same goes for the short period in which merchants from the towns of Buxtehude and Stade received licences for harbours, since Hamburg merchants are known to have continued sailing to most harbours.[262] Therefore, the following will remain limited to the merchant communities in Bremen and Hamburg.

First, however, there is the question of whether we can talk about one specific group here: can the North Atlantic merchants be regarded as one group or should we distinguish between Shetland, Faroe, and Iceland merchants? The records of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants in Hamburg suggest that at least in that city, these people grouped together, but were merchants only active in one region or were there overlaps? And how does this compare to Bremen?

In Hamburg, there are some examples of people trading in Shetland, the Faroes, and Iceland at various times. Philipp Grassel, who attempted a comparison of merchants active in these regions, found nine people active in both Shetland and the Faroes. Moreover, out of the 45 Icelandic merchants he identified, four (Dirick Berman, Franz Brandt, Hans Holtgreve, and Bernd Salefeld) also traded in Shetland, and seven (Hans Elers, Wilcken Cordes, Hans van Lubbeke, Herman van Schuren, Hans Smidt, Joachim Thim, and Joachim Wichman) in the Faroes. He did not identify any merchant active in all three regions.[263] There are a few more examples (Grassel did not consult the donation register himself), some of which I will mention without trying to be exhaustive. Daniel Elers, the factor for Joachim Wichman in the Faroes in 1586, obtained a licence for Berufjörður ("Bernforde") in Iceland in 1589–1597, and Cordt Basse, who was a servant in the 1550s in the Faroes, obtained licences for Þórshöfn and Vopnafjörður in Iceland in the 1590s.[264]

Grassel was struck by the fact that despite the donation register mentioning hundreds of names, very few merchants were apparently active in multiple regions.[265] This might appear curious at first glance indeed; however, if

262 See Section 3.5.4.
263 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 80–82.
264 See Appendix C.
265 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 80.

one tracks the members who held offices within the confraternity (one could say the confraternity's elite) in the donation register and analyses in which harbours they traded, it shows that most of them were active in a single harbour, even within Iceland, for most of their careers. If this was not the case, merchants usually stayed within the same region (e.g. the Snæfellsnes peninsula, the Reykjanes peninsula, or the northern harbours).[266] This pattern makes sense, if we take into account the importance of personal networks in the North Atlantic trade and personal knowledge of and experience with the local natural conditions for both trade and navigation, as has been discussed in the earlier chapters of this book.[267] Significantly, the four people active in both the Icelandic and the Shetland trade mentioned above only moved their business to Shetland when they were forced to do so by the introduction of the Danish trade monopoly in Iceland. And of the seven people active in both Iceland and the Faroes, five were skippers who also show up in various harbours in Iceland and who were probably hired by shipowners or merchants; and Thim and Wichman were big merchants acting on behalf of the Danish crown, with only Wichman trading in the Faroes himself. The two merchants I brought up, Elers and Basse, conducted their Icelandic business from home, as they do not show up in the donation register during the time of their licences.[268]

For Bremen, the evidence for merchants trading in both Shetland and Iceland is equally limited to a few cases only. In 1557, Christoffer Meyer sold his share in the *maschup* in Shetland to his partner Hinrick Sprenger, and his name appears in 1572 in a *maschup* contract for the harbour Berufjörður in Iceland.[269] However, it is not entirely certain that is the same person.[270] Gerdt Gerbade sold his share in a Shetland *maschup* in 1572,[271] and is mentioned in 1597 in connection with Stykkishólmur in Iceland.[272] Gerdt Westerwold moved in the other direction: in 1548, he complained about unwanted competition in Hólmur in Iceland,[273] and is mentioned in 1562 as a trading partner of skipper Johan Runge in Baltasound, Shetland.[274] The same goes for councillor Brun

266 See Appendix C.
267 See Section 4.1.2 and 4.3.
268 See Appendix C.
269 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 108 (15570514BRE00); SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00). See Sections 6.6.3 and 7.2.1.
270 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 64.
271 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: witness account of 4 May 1575 (15750504BRE00).
272 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: request for Stykkishólmur, 20 April 1597 (15970420BRE00).
273 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaints against Harmen Oldensche, 9 December 1548 (15481209BRE00).
274 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: complaints of Johan Runge, 26 October 1562 (15621026BRE00). See *SD 1195–1579*, no. 140.

Reimers, who also owned a share in the trading company in Hólmur, and is one of the people who sold their shares in the Shetland *maschup* in 1572. Beyond these examples, a brief note in the Oldenburg account book shows that the Oldenburg merchants in Iceland had changed money with Segebad Detken from Bremen, who was well known as a Shetland merchant.[275] The mention of Detken hints at the possibility that he also had connections in the Icelandic trade. In Bremen, then, the Shetland and Iceland merchants predominantly seem to have been distinct groups. The fact that there are only a few surnames common to the two groups supports the assessment that there were not strong connections between them.

7.4.1 Careers of merchants and skippers

It is possible to develop a good overview of the careers of some of the actors in the North Atlantic trade from a number of qualitative sources and by tracking the appearance of certain names over the years in the donation register from Hamburg. The most telling document was produced as evidence in the course of the dispute between Bremen and Hamburg merchants in Berufjörður in Iceland.[276] In 1591, four old men who had traded in Berufjörður were asked to testify about their careers to prove the long presence of Bremen merchants there. Jost Brockman, at 95 years old probably the oldest Bremen *Islandfahrer* still alive at the time, told how he had sailed about 80 years before (i.e. at the age of around 15) to Berufjörður as a gunner. Bernd Losekanne, 80 years old, recalled that he had started his career in Berufjörður about 60 years earlier as a sailor, after which he became a skipper and finally merchant.[277] We can add some details to his account, as he appears in both Bremen *maschup* contracts as well, in 1549 as merchant, and in 1572 as skipper.[278] His career as skipper ended in 1576, when the company disbanded and a new licence was issued to Christoffer Meyer. However, Losekanne is mentioned again as having trade interests in Berufjörður in 1580, jointly with Meyer, although it is not clear whether he traded in Iceland himself or stayed at home.[279] Meyer, 70 years old, was the next person to talk about his career, which he started as a barber-surgeon 53 years earlier, later becoming a merchant. Finally, Luder Wedeman,

275 SAO 262–1, no. 2 (15850307OLD00), leaflet A.I.

276 See Section 6.6.3.

277 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 3 December 1590 (15901203BRE00).

278 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 8 April 1549 (15490408BRE00); 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00).

279 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaints about Hamburgers in Berufjörður, 23 January 1580 (15800123-BRE00).

more than 70 years old, stated that he had been in Berufjörður for the first time 56 years before, but did not specify his occupation.[280]

Although these stories are all quite different, the common element is that all these men started sailing at a young age. Moreover, they show that the roles of crew member, merchant, skipper, and even barber-surgeon were not always clearly separable. Losekanne's career was more or less typical for a skipper, who usually would start out as a ship's boy or ordinary sailor as a teenager, then move up to helmsman or *schimman* (responsible for the rigging and other technical matters on the ship), and by his thirties have become a skipper of a ship.[281] The memoirs of Bremen skipper Brüning Rulves describe a similar trajectory: Rulves was taken on his first journey by his stepfather when he was twelve, and at the age of 33 acquired his own ship. For the rest of his career until his retirement at the age of 55, he was not always a skipper, instead being a *schimman* or scribe at times, positions that required special skills, experience, and technical knowledge.[282]

Although skippers did trade and merchants did act as skippers, many merchants, even those travelling themselves, followed another career trajectory, which had little to do with seafaring. The debt register of Clawes Monnickhusen provides an example in this regard. The sparse personal notes in the register mention that he and his father bought the debts of Clawes Ficken in 1557, he married in 1561, and continued the book by himself in 1574. However, the register, which covers debts in Iceland in 1557–1558, and in Bremen in 1562–1577, is written in one and the same hand. This suggests that his father stayed at home and the son sailed to Iceland to do business there, and after his marriage settled in Bremen and ran the company together with his father until 1574, when he took it over from the latter.[283] It is not clear if the skipper "Claus Monickhussen" mentioned in the accounts of Eggert Hannesson in Kumbaravogur in 1552 is the father or son.[284]

In Hamburg, a survey of the office holders in the confraternity and licence holders in the donation register shows that only a few had typical skipper careers.[285] Most likely this is due to the fact that there were many more merchants active than ships in the Icelandic trade, which means that the skippers formed a minority in the community of North Atlantic merchants.[286] Another possibility

280 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 3 December 1590 (15901203BRE00).

281 Brück, "Nur Schiffer?", 34–35; Holterman, "Ship Crews".

282 Focke, "Seefahrtenbuch", 93.

283 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 24–29; cf. Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*, 145, for Germans in Bergen who left the *Kontor* to get married in Germany.

284 *DI* 12:323. See Table 5.1.

285 See Appendix C.

286 See also Section 7.4.4.

is that it is often difficult to identify crew members or servants, who are mostly not indicated as such, by their donated amounts. Usually only the leading merchants are clearly identifiable, due to their donations being significantly larger.

Based on this survey, it seems that many merchants started out by being servants for other merchants for anywhere from five to twenty years, and then were able to go into business for themselves. Many probably continued to trade from home after they cease being mentioned in the register as active merchants, as they held offices or otherwise served in the confraternity.[287] There are some (e.g. Paul Barnefeld, Jochim Danninck, Ambrosius Loring, and Jurgen Schinckel) who apparently did not have an "apprentice phase" as servant or crew member in the North Atlantic trade. This either reflects the possibility that not everyone on board donated to the confraternity (especially the young crew members and servants or those of lesser social standing), or that these were newcomers in the North Atlantic trade who acquired a share in a ship after having been active elsewhere previously. Moreover, some were probably active, perhaps for a long time, in the North Atlantic before the donation practice became well established in the 1540s. This would explain the absence of many "early" eldermen, *schaffer*, and treasurers from the register.

The entries from the ships coming from Hafnarfjörður regularly list donations of pairs of merchants, one of whom was an established merchant who had been trading for a considerable number of years and the other a young merchant who had been mentioned as being a servant in earlier years, for example Hans Kopman and Cordt Moller on the ships of Joachim Hare in 1594/5.[288] This might hint at some kind of mentoring system, whereby established merchants guided aspiring merchants in the early stages of their trading. Interestingly, these pairs of merchants almost never share the same surname, suggesting that even when fathers and sons were on board together, it was preferred that a young merchant be mentored by a non-relative.

7.4.2 Family ties

As has been mentioned above, the careers of actors in the North Atlantic trade point to the importance of family relations. In medieval and early modern Europe, as well as in other regions and times, the family was the most important unit of social interaction, and therefore also central to mercantile

287 See Section 7.2.4.
288 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), ff. 382v, 388r.

enterprises.[289] Regrettably, it is impossible to quantify the importance of family relations in the North Atlantic trade, as Burkhardt has done for example for the Hanseatic Bergen trade,[290] as the exact relations between actors in the trade are often obscure. An assessment of the importance of marriage or lineage for access to the network of North Atlantic merchants is therefore only possible if one traces the life of individual actors in their home towns, which will have to await further research. However, it is possible to illustrate the importance of family relations to some extent with qualitative examples from the sources.

The Hamburg donation register is a source with a high potential with regard to the study the importance of family relations in the North Atlantic trade. However, it is hard to track individuals because often more than one person with the same name appears in a certain year. Aside from the occasional specification of "the elder" or "the younger", persons are only mentioned by name and indications of family relations are very rare. However, we can assume that in most cases, multiple instances of the same name in a year points at two or more generations of a family being active in the trade, especially given the custom of naming first sons after their grandfather.[291] In most cases, it is only possible to distinguish between these people based on the amount they donated and the ship with which they are associated, in conjunction with the records from earlier and later years. For example, it is possible to identify three Peter Rykelmans (I: 1533–1538; II: 1543–1564; III: 1560–1572), presumably father, son, and grandson, who were all first servants and then merchants in Hafnarfjörður. It seems that Peter III became a merchant in 1565, when Peter II disappeared from the records. However, it cannot be excluded that Peter II continued as a merchant while his son stopped sailing, to illustrate the difficulties with interpretation.

On the other hand, a similar sequence whereby the younger generation of a family seamlessly takes over the business of the older can be discerned in other instances. For example, Joachim vam Warder can be identified first as servant, and from 1571 onwards as merchant in Hafnarfjörður. In 1588, Baltzer vam Warder appears on the same ships as servant and becomes merchant in 1599, the year Joachim disappears from the records.[292] In the same year, a Joachim vam Warder "the Younger" is now listed as servant. Although it is

289 Burkhardt, *Bergenhandel*, 222; see also Kerstin Seidel, *Freunde und Verwandte. Soziale Beziehungen in einer spätmittelalterlichen Stadt*, Campus Historische Studien 49 (Frankfurt, New York, 2009), 235–238.

290 Burkhardt, *Bergenhandel*, 228–232.

291 Cf. Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 26–29, for the family of Clawes Monnickhusen.

292 See Appendix C.

not entirely certain that these are fathers and sons, it is very likely, as in the case of the Rykelman family. Moreover, some documents explicitly mention sons continuing the business of their fathers. Such is the case with Hans Eggers, who was granted a licence for Skagafjörður after his father Matthias drowned in the Elbe in 1593.[293]

The Bremen *maschup* contracts for Berufjörður in particular highlight the importance of family tradition in the Icelandic trade. In addition to the fact that six people are named in both contracts, the same surnames appear more than once as well: in both contracts, there is a Luder and a Herman Wedeman, and in 1572 there is a Luder Meyer listed with a Christoffer Meyer and a Marten and Luder Losekanne listed with skipper Bernd Losekanne.[294] Moreover, in a later document Bernd Losekanne stated that his brother Johan had sailed to the same harbour before him.[295] In both years we also find a Van Osnabrugge: Hans in 1549 and Hinrick in 1572. Although family relations are not specified, except in the case of Johan and Bernd Losekanne, we can assume that people with the same surname were brothers, cousins, or fathers and sons. It is very probable that these family relations contributed to the *maschup* splitting in two, as Bernd Losekanne claimed that Luder Meyer and Luder Wedeman had mutinied against him in 1574, and Christoffer Meyer took the side of (his son?) Luder Meyer.[296]

Marriage has always been a powerful tool in strengthening social ties between families and to gain or control access to a social group. In the case of medieval and early modern merchants, marriage served to extend the personal network of the merchant and to enhance his trustworthiness.[297] It is therefore not surprising that we can also trace family ties by marriage in the circles of North Atlantic merchants. Cilie, the wife of Paul Lindeman from Hamburg, for example, wrote in 1592 to the Danish Council of the Realm that her father had sailed to Vopnafjörður for 20 years, and that after his death her husband had continued the trade in the harbour.[298] Her father was probably Cordt Botker, who had a licence for Vopnafjörður together with Lindeman in 1586 that was

293 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): 3 July 1595 (15950703HAM01). See also Section 6.5.2.

294 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00).

295 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: final plea of Losekanne, 1576 (15760200BRE00).

296 Ibid.

297 Burkhardt, *Bergenhandel*, 223.

298 "mein zeliger vatter vör zwentzig und mehr yaren die Ißlandische haven Wapenförde benant, besiegelt habe: welliche have nach absterben meines vattern, mein eheman vorgemelt Paul Lindeman wiederumb underthenigst erlanget, und bißnunhero besucht hatt". RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): request of Cilie Lindeman, 10 March 1592 (15920310HAM00).

reissued in late 1587 for Paul Lindeman after Botker's death.[299] It is possible that Lindeman, who appears in the donation register for the first time as a servant in 1570, had entered the trade through the marriage with Botker's daughter. Similarly, Carsten Langwedel, a Hamburg merchant in Shetland in the 1550s, was married to Hille, the daughter of Helmeke Wittenborch, who had traded in Shetland before him.[300] And merchant Hans Hering helped his son-in-law Albert Sivers to acquire a licence for Skagafjörður after Sivers' trading partner Matthias Eggers had drowned in 1593.[301]

Other instances are known of North Atlantic merchants from Hamburg who married women who cannot be linked directly to another North Atlantic merchant, but who have surnames that appear often in the confraternity records. Some examples are Christina Stemmelman, wife of Jurgen Jacobsen; Lucia van Hutlen, wife of Jacob Hambrock; and Catharina Hambrock, wife of Hans Drape.[302] Examples are also known from Bremen and Oldenburg, such as Joachim Kolling, who tried to hire his brother-in-law Roleff Gerdes from Bremen to sail to Iceland with him.[303] The marriages of Icelanders into the families of Hamburg merchants have already been discussed above.[304]

7.4.3 Women in the North Atlantic trade

Although the late medieval Hanseatic trade was predominantly conducted by men, women were involved beyond being marriage partners. It may be that their role in the North Atlantic trade was quite substantial, even though they rarely appear in the sources. It is known from other branches of late medieval commerce and the craft trade that the wives of merchants and craftsmen often helped run their husbands' businesses, with some continuing the business successfully after the death of their spouse.[305] In the ordinances of the Hamburg stockfish mongers, for example, the wives of the merchants are often mentioned prominently as actors in the trade, and in many instances they enjoyed

299 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): 21 October 1587 (15871021HAM00).

300 Krüger, *Namensverzeichnis der Englandfahrergesellschaft*.

301 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): request of 3 July 1595 (15950703HAM01).

302 See Appendix C.

303 See Sections 6.3.5 and 7.2.1.

304 See Section 4.3.5.

305 Maija Ojala, *Protection, Continuity and Gender: Craft Trade Culture in the Baltic Sea Region (14th–16th Centuries)* (Tampere, 2014), 269–270, shows that in Lübeck, the craft rules left possibilities open for widows to continue businesses after the deaths of their husbands to ensure continuity of production.

the same rights and performed the same duties as their husbands.[306] The letters that Bremen burgomaster Detmar Kenckel wrote to his wife testify to her management of his business affairs while he was gone. She handled financial transactions, the acquisition of goods, and the freighting of ships while he was in political exile in Oldenburg from 1562 to 1568.[307]

In the North Atlantic trade, women must have played a significant role behind the scenes and in rare cases in the foreground. In the Hamburg donation register we find donations by wives or widows of North Atlantic traders, not only as separate donations after 1601, but also in rare cases on ships. For instance, we find donations by both Ambrosius Loring and his wife on Christoffer Moller's ship from Arnarstapi in 1589, and in 1590 a donation from Gertrud, Roleff Eys' sister, on the ship of Hinrich Bode from Ísafjörður.[308] It is not entirely clear if these women actually sailed to Iceland, or if they only made a financial contribution to the journey. Moreover, in 1583 there is a list of donations from the ship of Margarete Bare, suggesting that women could be shipowners.[309] It is striking that she is not mentioned as someone's widow or wife, which was usual in the case when women were acting on their own account.

The unexpected death of a seafaring merchant was a financial as well as an emotional blow to the surviving wife, which was a reason for many of them to try to continue the businesses of their late husbands, with mixed results. The widow of Bremen skipper Johan Munsterman, who died in a shipwreck in 1578, for example, tried to continue trading in Kumbaravogur, but was unsuccessful as the licence for the harbour was issued to Joachim Kolling from Oldenburg.[310] In the case of the widow of Thomas Koppen, who had been active in the Faroes, she received permission for one year only to reclaim her late husband's outstanding debts.[311] There is one instance of a sister of a merchant trying to continue the family business after his death: in a 1538 letter from Hamburg to the Icelandic lawman Erlendur Þorvarðarson, Alheyd Rosenbrock requested permission to send two merchants to Iceland to reclaim the outstanding debts of her deceased brother Hans. Their father Dithmer had apparently been a mer-

306 SAH 611–8, no. 9, ff. 29–40; Rüdiger, *Zunftrollen*, 81.

307 Smidt, "Aus Detmar Kenckel's Nachlass", 21–36.

308 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 348v: "Ambrosius Lorinck syne husfrow", f. 359r: "Gerdrudt, Roleff syne suster". Roleff Eys is the only Roleff on the same ship.

309 SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00), f. 284r.

310 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 9 February 1579 (15790209BRE00). The licence had been granted to Kolling upon Munsterman's death; see Section 6.3.5.

311 Kohl, "Überseeische Handelsunternehmungen", 427. See also Section 3.6.

chant in Iceland as well.[312] It helped if a widow had a son who could take over the business of his father, as did Cilie, the wife of Hamburg merchant Paul Lindeman, who had run into trouble from pirate attacks in two consecutive years. In his absence (the letter does not mention his death), she requested a prolongation of Paul's licence for Vopnafjörður from the Danish council of the Realm in 1592 on behalf of her son Hans Lindeman, together with the Hamburg merchants in nearby Þórshöfn.[313] Although the licence was granted,[314] it is unclear whether the Lindeman family did in fact trade, as Hans Lindeman does not appear in the donation register after 1592.[315]

The 1572 Bremen *maschup* contract provides evidence of some instances of the long-term success of widows, as it records three women as having assumed ownership of the shares of their late husbands. Two of the late husbands, Gerdt Tilebare and Reineke Winters, are recorded as owning shares in the previous contract from 1549; the third, Reineke Stroteman, must have joined the company after that year.[316] Similarly, the widow of Hamburg merchant Peter Sivers received a prolongation of her late husband's licence for Skagaströnd twice, in 1596 and 1599, testifying to her lasting partnership with Jurgen Vilter, who had been her late husband's trading partner.[317] Finally, Margaretha, the widow of Lübeck burgomaster Bartholomeus Tinappel, who had a licence for Dýrafjörður at the time of his death in the Danish war against Sweden, repeatedly tried to continue her husband's business there, and was eventually granted a licence for the harbour "Alnfiord" (probably Álftafjörður) in 1567. According to a later document, Lübeck merchants remained active in the region during Christoffer Valckendorf's time as governor of Iceland (1569–1570), which suggests that Margaretha was successful for at least some years.[318] In all these cases, it is unlikely that the women sailed to Iceland themselves, as the Hamburgers among them do not show up in the donation register. Most probably they managed their businesses from home and their *maschup* partners dealt with North Atlantic customers face-to-face.

312 SAH Islandica, vol. 2 (15380000HAM00).
313 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): 10 March 1592 (15920310HAM00).
314 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18b): 4 November 1594 (15941104HAM00).
315 See also Sections 6.5.5, 6.6.1 and Appendix C.
316 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00).
317 RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00). See also Section 6.5.1.
318 *DI* 15:9 (15670909KOB00); RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): letter of Johan Holtgreve, 1599 (15990000HAM01). See also Section 6.4.2.

7.4.4 Social stratification within the community of North Atlantic smerchants in Hamburg

The records of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants in Hamburg potentially provide data to confirm social stratification within the community of North Atlantic merchants, i.e. that specific groups can be distinguished of which some were more influential than others. There is, however, no sign of tables (*gelagen*) within the confraternity for specific groups, e.g. the Shetland or Faroese merchants, which did exist for the Iceland merchants within the society of England merchants.[319] Nor are other divisions in subgroups visible, despite the low incidence of merchants sailing to more than one region, as has been shown above.

At a first glance, the confraternity seems to have been dominated by merchants trading in Hafnarfjörður: from the members with official functions (*schaffer*, treasurers, and eldermen) within the confraternity, 117 can be shown to have had commercial interests in a certain harbour or region.[320] 52 of these persons (almost 45 percent) were active as merchants in Hafnarfjörður, which would appear to demonstrate a clear dominance in absolute numbers; they would be a majority if we include the merchants in the nearby harbours of Básendar and Keflavík on the Reykjanes peninsula, who often appear in cooperation with the merchants in Hafnarfjörður. However, the ships sailing to these harbours were also the ones with the largest number of people on board, up to 77 for Hafnarfjörður, whereas ships to other harbours carried 15–21 people.[321] This means that the Hafnarfjörður merchants did constitute a significant minority of the total community. It is therefore the question if the Hafnarfjörður merchants were correspondingly dominant within the community of North Atlantic merchants.

If we look at the distribution of the number of people sailing to a specific harbour in four years, 1548, 1559, 1575, and 1591 (Figure 7.3), we can see that the merchants in Hafnarfjörður constituted about a quarter to a third of the entire group of Hamburg merchants and seafarers who sailed north in each of those years. This is less than the calculated 45 percent of Hafnarfjörður merchants within the confraternity's "elite", which would suggest that the Hafnarfjörður merchants were indeed also dominant within the confraternity in a relative sense. However, both percentages are not so far apart that the difference can be considered significant, especially since there are many unknowns, e.g. the many

319 Grassel, "Schifffahrt im Nordatlantik", 74. See also Section 7.1.1.1.

320 See Appendix C.

321 Hofmeister, "Kaufleute auf Island", 44; Ehrenberg, "Handelsgeschichte"; Holterman, "Ship Crews".

schaffer, treasurers, and eldermen for whom it is not known where they were trading; possible errors in associating ships with certain harbours; lacunae in the data; or differences in spending patterns among the persons on board certain ships. We might therefore conclude that the Hafnarfjörður merchants did not enjoy a privileged position within the confraternity, especially if we consider that merchants associated with other harbours were well represented among the officers of the confraternity, such as Ríf (11 persons), Shetland (six), and Arnarstapi (seven). The lack of merchants with the Faroes as officers within the confraternity is striking, which might have to do with the policy of royal monopolies for Danish factors within the Faroese trade.

Another curious point is that very few skippers served as officers of the confraternity, despite the relative importance of skippers in this trade, as has been sketched above.[322] Only one full-time skipper (Peter Korner) was elderman, and another sixteen out of 191 persons who were *schaffer*, treasurer, or elderman can be shown to have skippered at least in some years. However, this does not mean that skippers were relatively under-represented within the community of North Atlantic merchants. Hofmeister has estimated that Iceland was visited each year by *c*. 750 Germans, of whom *c*. 400 were merchants and their servants, who arrived on only about 25 ships.[323] As each ship had only one skipper, this number seems to render the characterisation of the North Atlantic trade as pre-eminently a skipper's endeavour less defensible.[324]

7.4.5 The social position of the North Atlantic merchants: Burgomasters and councillors

When assessing the social position of a certain group of merchants within late medieval towns, it is common to look at a number of specific factors: the acquisition of immovable property in the town or elsewhere and the participation in *Gesellschaften*, confraternities, or other social organisations. Especially important indicators of a group's social status are the holding of leading or honorary positions within these associations and the degree to which members of the group enter the highest social and political stratum within a town, i.e. that of the burgomasters and town councillors.[325] Mainly concerned with the organisa-

322 See Section 7.2.3.
323 Hofmeister, "Kaufleute auf Island", 44.
324 Reißmann, *Kaufmannschaft*, 72.
325 See for example Burkhardt, *Bergenhandel*, 311–312.

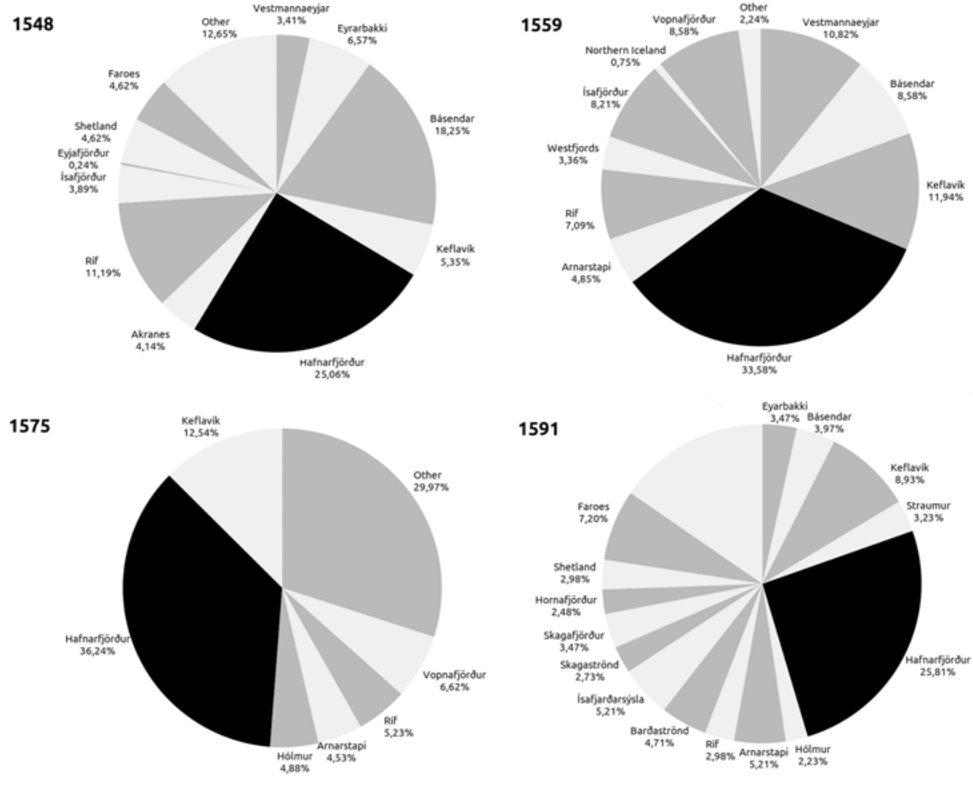

Figure 7.3: Distribution of Hamburg seafarers and merchants per harbour in 1548, 1559, 1575, and 1591. The figures are based on the total numbers of people on board of ships as recorded in the Hamburg donation register.

tion of the North Atlantic trade and the networks of its actors, the present study did not undertake an extensive analysis of property acquisition. Of the other factors, the relations to merchant societies, confraternities, and charitable associations have already been discussed above.[326] The following section will therefore focus on the merchants who served as councillors and burgomasters in the North Atlantic trade.

Friederike Koch has noted the strikingly low number of Hamburg councillors who were members of the confraternity of St Anne of the *Islandfahrer*. Of the 206 people who held offices in the confraternity of Iceland merchants, she has identified only two who became councillors: Godert Schroder (1486–1568) and Dirick Moller (d. 1624).[327] I found only two more North Atlantic merchants who were councillors; they do not appear (often) in the sources of the confraternity. In 1562, councillor Hinrick van Kroge was partaking in freighting a ship to sail to Iceland to fetch sulphur on behalf of the Loitz family,[328] and Joachim Wullenwever, active in the Faroes, was councillor from 1533 to 1536.[329] This stands in marked contrast to merchants from other societies, most notably the England and Flanders merchants, from whom were drawn a large portion of the city's councillors during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as has been shown above.[330] The same goes for the *Oberalte* (governors of the parish churches), many of whom belonged to the societies of the England, Flanders, and Scania merchants, but only four (out of a total of 65) were active in the North Atlantic trade, namely Hinrick Davorde, Joachim Wullenwever, Thomas Koppen, and Hans Eggers.[331] If we accept Eiríksson's estimate that ten to fifteen percent of the city's population was active in the North Atlantic trade,[332] these are remarkable figures, and they contribute to the image that the North Atlantic merchants were less influential in Hamburg.[333]

326 See Section 7.1.

327 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 41; Ehrenberg, *Hamburg und England*, 79; *Fasti Pro-Consulares & Consulares Hamburgenses, Secundis curis Auctiores Ab a. C.M.CCXCII. ad MDCCX.*, 2 vols (Hamburg, 1710) nos. 542, 621.

328 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): declaration of Hamburg merchants, 14 April 1562 (15620414HAM00); *Fasti Pro-Consulares* no. 558.

329 *Fasti Pro-Consulares* no. 532.

330 See Section 7.1.1.1.

331 Rainer Postel, *Die Reformation in Hamburg 1517–1528*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 52 (Gütersloh, 1986), 387–392.

332 Eiríksson, "Mikilvægi Íslandsverslunarinnar", 2.

333 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 39.

Curiously, in the other towns where merchants were involved in the North Atlantic trade, examples of councillors and burgomasters drawn from their ranks abound. Among the few Lübeck merchants involved in the Icelandic trade, we find burgomaster Bartholomeus Tinappel.[334] And among the members of the Icelandic trading association founded in Oldenburg in 1580, two of the part shipowners served as burgomasters and five were councillors.[335] In Bremen, the situation was comparable. According to Detmar Kenckel, the son of the Bremen burgomaster with the same name (1554–1562), who tried to acquire a licence for Arnarstapi in 1591 as a factor of Duke Henry Julius of Brunswick-Lüneburg, his father had been active in Arnarstapi as well.[336] Moreover, in a document from 1502 two Iceland merchants with the names Kinkel and Wilde are mentioned, who might have been from Bremen. Kinkel may have been Dietrich Kenckel, burgomaster of Verden and father of Detmar the Elder, who took over Dietrich's business upon his death in 1531.[337] Wilde might then refer to Bremen councillor Hinrick Wilde (1500–1516).[338]

Moreover, we have noted councillor Hinrick Salomon, who owned shares in various ships to Iceland. Salomon was also a member of Bremen's brewers society, which might have been related to his exporting of beer to Iceland, as it is unlikely he was a brewer himself.[339] Herman Schomaker and Herman Krechting, who claimed to have been trading in Keflavík and Grindavík in Iceland for a long time and tried to acquire licences for these harbours in 1566 (Figure 7.4),[340] were prominent figures: Schomaker was councillor from 1566 and became burgomaster in 1584,[341] and while Krechting (or Krefting) held no official position in the council,

334 *DI* 14:289 (15650814KOB00). See Sections 3.5.4 and 6.4.2.

335 SAO 262–1, no. 1 (15801116OLD00); Kohl, "Der oldenburgisch-isländische Handel", 38, 42–43.

336 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): request for Arnarstapi, 7 September 1591 (15910907BRE00). Prange, *Kaufmannschaft*, 44 and Smidt, "Aus Detmar Kenckel's Nachlass", 30, do not mention Kenckel's Icelandic trade, except for a small note in a letter of Kenckel to his wife from 1567, in which he writes about Icelandic stockfish.

337 *DI* 8:76; *DN* 16:338 (15020300LUB00); Schwebel, "Kenckel, Detmar". See also Section 6.3.2.

338 *Fasti Consulares Et Senatorii Inclutae Reipublicae Bremensis Ab Anno M CCCCXXXIII. Repetiti Et In Praesens Tempus Producti* (Bremen, 1726), 15 no. 121.

339 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 36–37.

340 RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15): 6 September 1565 (15650906BRE00), 29 March 1566 (15660329BRE00). See also Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.4.

341 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 55; *Fasti Consulares*, 26 no. 220.

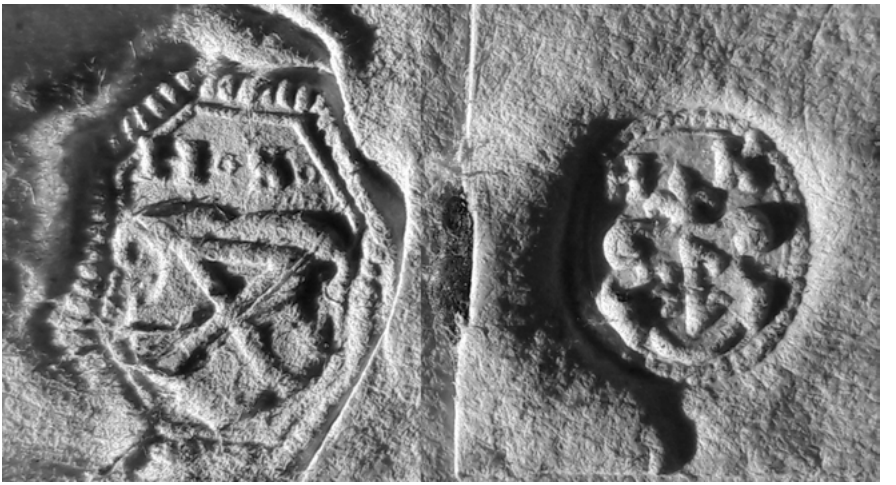

Figure 7.4: The seals of Herman Schomaker (H.S.) and Herman Krechting (H.K.) with their coats of arms showing housemarks. Pressed on a letter to Joachim Hinck, dean of the Bremen cathedral chapter, for assistance in acquiring licences for the harbours Keflavík and Grindavík in Iceland, 29 March 1566. RAK D11, Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15660329BRE00).

he was sent on behalf of the city to negotiate with the Dutch privateers who were blockading the Weser river in 1586.[342] Furthermore, councillor Luder Losekanne (1573–1612) was one of the 1572 *maschup* partners in Berufjörður who stayed in Bremen.[343] Bremen councillors were active in the Shetland trade as well. The 1575 witness account about the sale of a *maschup* in Shetland in 1572 lists two who had shares in the company: Carsten Steding (councillor 1562, burgomaster 1574–1597) and Brun Reimers (councillor 1548–1593), the latter also having been active in the Iceland trade in 1548.[344]

These data suggest that the social position of the North Atlantic merchants in Bremen was therefore better than in Hamburg. However, there is a possibility that this conclusion is distorted by a source bias. The Hamburg evidence leans heavily on the records of the confraternity of St Anne, in which the merchants who were personally active in Iceland dominate, whereas more-qualitative

342 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 75.

343 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00); *Fasti Consulares*, 26 no. 228.

344 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: witness account of 4 May 1575 (15750504BRE00); 2-R.11.ff.: complaints against Harmen Oldensche, 9 December 1548 (15481209BRE00); *Fasti Consulares*, 21 no. 178, 24 no. 203; Werner Hennig, "Die Ratsgeschlechter Bremens im Mittelalter: ein Beitrag zur hansischen Sozialgeschichte" (1957), 79.

sources are largely absent. As we have seen, the councillors and burgomasters who were active in the North Atlantic trade in Bremen were most likely part shipowners conducting their business from home, whereas none of the Bremen merchants sailing to Iceland or Shetland themselves (e.g. Carsten Bake, Bernd Losekanne, Christoffer Meyer, Heine Ratkens, Gerdt Hemeling, and Segebad Detken, to name just a few) are known to have served as city councillors. It is not hard to imagine that in Hamburg, councillors and burgomasters were active in freighting ships or part shipowners in the North Atlantic trade in larger numbers as well, but that the evidence has been lost over time (or has not been rediscovered yet).

8 Summary and conclusion

It was predominantly the high demand for preserved fish in continental Europe that drove the establishment of direct trade relations between the northern German towns and the North Atlantic islands Iceland, the Faroes, and Shetland in the fifteenth century. The local economies responded to this high demand by developing their export fisheries at the cost of subsistence farming. Stockfish – freeze-dried fish – was highly sought after; it was produced from diverse fish species using a variety of methods, resulting in stockfish being differentiated in various categories. The growing importance of salted dried fish in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was primarily important for the Shetlandic economy, but this was true on the other islands to some extent as well. Next to fish products, important North Atlantic commodities were woollen homespun or *wadmal*, butter, sulphur, and gyrfalcons, the latter two only in Iceland. Going the other way were many continental commodities: foodstuffs like beer and grain, woollen and linen fabrics, timber, iron, and fabricated items such as tools and clothing, for which there was a high demand in the North Atlantic.

Politically, there were two defining factors in the development of the North Atlantic trade: the position of the North Atlantic islands as *skattlands* (tributary lands) of the Norwegian (later: Danish) crown, and the position of Bergen as a staple market for the *skattlands* and northern Norway. While Hanseatic merchants came to dominate the trade between Bergen, England, and the European continent, under the privileges granted to them by the Norwegian king, they were not allowed to trade with the *skattlands* themselves. This changed when the English started to trade and fish in Iceland in the first decades of the fifteenth century. Hanseatic merchants, for whom England was an important market for stockfish, quickly followed suit in an attempt to prevent the English competition.

However, a critical re-assessment of the primary sources has revealed that the Hanseatic reaction was a slow and hesitant one. Although there are a number of instances in which merchants from Hamburg, Danzig, or Lübeck were directly active in the North Atlantic before 1468, these should be considered as single instances, and there are few reasons to assume frequent and well-established direct trade connections in this period. For the Hanse, the issue was of primary importance, because it touched upon a cornerstone of the Hanseatic structure, which was the privileged positions of the merchants in the Hanseatic *Kontor*s abroad. Moreover, violations of the prohibition to trade with the *skattlands* were usually restricted to Iceland: evidence for frequent direct trade with the Faroes and Shetland before the turn of the century is extremely thin.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-008

The year 1468 was the turning point in the North Atlantic trade for the German merchants for two reasons. First, in that year King Christian I of Denmark opened Iceland to Germans after problems with the English there, and second, he lost control of Shetland, which was pawned to Scotland in the next year. No longer at risk of losing their Norwegian privileges, German merchants from Hamburg and Bremen especially, who did not have large interests in the Lübeck-dominated Bergen *Kontor*, started to sail to Iceland more frequently. In spite of repeated complaints from the eldermen of the Bergen *Kontor* and the Norwegian Council of the Realm, who feared that the North Atlantic trade would damage the position of the staple of Bergen, the German merchants became commercially dominant in Iceland by the turn of the century, which led to frequent clashes with the English. The strong influence of Hamburg in the political turmoil in Denmark in the 1520s and 1530s helped to bolster the position of its merchants in Iceland, where they largely drove out the English in cooperation with the Danish royal authorities. In the Faroes, Hamburg merchants gained trading rights as well as political influence from 1520 onwards. Bremen merchants had by this time established a strong commercial position in Shetland.

From the 1540s onwards, after the political situation in Denmark stabilised, the Danish kings took steps to reduce German influence in Iceland and to strengthen the position of Danish merchants in a mercantilist fashion. The first was to limit the presence of German merchants in Iceland by enforcing the prohibition of the winter stay. King Frederick II moved even more aggressively, putting the monopoly on the Icelandic sulphur trade in the hands of the Loitz family from Stettin in 1561 and introducing licences for single Icelandic harbours a few years later. This caused a number of fundamental changes that undermined the dominant position in Iceland of Hamburg merchants in particular, among others the appearance of Danish merchants in the trade, and increased competition between Germans. By the 1580s, the Danish crown had greatly increased its control over the foreign traders in Iceland, even though on a first glance the Germans were still dominating the trade.

The Faroes can be considered a testing ground for these mercantilist measures. With the death of monopolist Thomas Koppen in 1553, the Hamburg influence ended for some time, and the islands were given to Danish merchants. When Hamburg merchants returned to the Faroes in the 1570s, they did so as Danish factors, more often than not cooperating with merchants from Copenhagen or Bergen. By the early 1590s, there was no longer a Hamburg presence in the Faroes.

From here it was only a small step to close the Icelandic trade to non-Danish merchants, as King Christian IV did in 1601. However, Hamburg attempts to become the central market for Icelandic stockfish on the continent during the sixteenth century had been successful, and because of the Hamburg know-how and

networks in the Icelandic trade built up over many generations, the Danish merchants were still largely dependent on the Hamburg market and merchants for some decades.

Other Hamburg merchants who had formerly traded with Iceland increasingly turned to Shetland, which had been left untouched by the Danish mercantilist measures. After 1469, Shetland had gradually become more Scottish, both in sociocultural and political aspects, but this did not have a great influence on the development of the trade there until after 1600. In the second half of the seventeenth century, however, mercantilist tendencies became noticeable in the Shetland trade as well. The ever-rising customs on imports to Shetland, especially salt, made the Shetland trade ever less attractive for German merchants, together with the disruptions of frequent naval warfare, economic and social crises, and the increasing involvement of Scottish landowners in the trade. The German trade with Shetland came to a definitive halt with the Treaty of Union in 1707: the treaty prohibited salt imports on foreign ships, depriving German merchants of what they needed to cure Shetland fish.

The goal of the second part of this research was to show how the German merchants operated in the North Atlantic, how they built up and maintained their networks, and how they acted when problems arose between them and their customers. A defining factor in these relations was the great physical distance between the German towns and the North Atlantic islands, which made the constant information exchange with and control of the North Atlantic market difficult, especially as foreign traders were not allowed to stay in Iceland in winter when the stockfish was produced.

Central to the commercial relations between Germans and islanders were credit transactions. In Iceland and the Faroes, a credit system was in place that had originated in Bergen, in which stockfish producers would buy commodities on credit from the German merchants, which the former would repay in kind the next year. This was profitable for both sides, as stockfish producers were guaranteed a constant supply of foreign goods independent of changes in production, and German merchants could bind stockfish producers to them. For Shetland, the evidence for the existence of such a credit system is thin, although credit was widely used in transactions in both directions.

A comparison between the Icelandic and the Norwegian situation has revealed the essential differences in conditions between the two regions. In contrast to Norway, merchants in Iceland were free to travel around, and could therefore visit indebted clients at home. On the other hand, the Icelanders could be indebted to multiple merchants, which complicated the system. The most important difference, however, was the absence of an institution like the Bergen *Kontor*, which exercised control over the credit relations between Germans and islanders. Therefore, great

importance was attached to the establishment of informal social networks in order to build up trust between the involved parties and guarantee the repayment of debts in most cases.

Qualitative analysis of letters and pleas in court cases, as well as evidence from the account books of German merchants in Iceland, have shown the variety of methods by which these networks were established and maintained. A crucial exception to the prohibition of the winter stay was the permission for young merchants to stay in winter in Iceland to learn the language and to establish relations with the local population. Beyond the extension of credit, German merchants provided other services to Icelanders such as supplying them with fishing boats and visiting clients at home. Moreover, the Germans brought barber-surgeons with them, who provided medical care for the local population.

The frequent shipping connections between the German towns and Iceland meant that many Icelanders used these ships to travel to the European continent, or were hired by Germans as crew members on these ships. Moreover, some Icelanders eventually settled in Hamburg, where they married into local families, often relatives of the German merchants with Iceland. They became active in the trade themselves and became partners in the German trading companies. This phenomenon is also attested in Shetland.

An important factor in the relations with the insular clients was having the ability to turn to local authorities for assistance, especially in the case of problems with debt payments or disputes between merchants. Both on Shetland and Iceland, it seems that foreign merchants had access to all levels of the local courts. In Iceland, this was especially the case with the Althing, the central governing organ, where representatives of the German merchants were regularly present in the case of conflicts. In Shetland, German merchants appear in the court books at the local parish courts as well as the central court in Scalloway in connection with matters ranging from debt problems to violent conflicts. Moreover, it was important to establish close relations with local officials on the islands. These relations were the closest in the Faroes, which were enfeoffed to the German or Danish merchants, who were also responsible for tax collection. In Iceland, political offices on all levels were sometimes held by Germans, including some merchants who managed to become *sýslumenn* (district sheriffs) at the end of the sixteenth century in heavily contested areas such as the Snæfellsnes peninsula or the Eastfjords, where they had a direct influence on trading conditions.

Finally, German merchants in the North Atlantic maintained good relations with the local churches on the islands. Next to providing them with special items such as religious books or liturgical objects, German merchants also made donations to local churches, and those who died in the North Atlantic were buried in

the local churchyards, thereby emphasising the connections between German merchants and islanders even beyond the boundaries of time.

The commercial and social activity of the North Atlantic trade concentrated in the trading stations, by absence of urban settlements on the islands. These usually consisted of a sheltered bay that provided reasonably secure conditions for anchoring a ship and on the shore of which booths had been built. These booths served as shops and storage space, especially for unsold commodities left during winter. The booths usually had a semi-temporal character and were constructed in the local building style, i.e. with turf walls and roofs and gables of (imported) timber. In Shetland, booths were often constructed of stone, indicating a more permanent character. Given the lack of advanced port infrastructure, transport between the sailing ship and the booths on shore occurred in boats.

The licence system, which was in place in Iceland from the early 1560s onwards, enables a detailed investigation of the situation in individual harbours. A study of these has revealed that German merchants were present in more than 30 harbours in Iceland. The distribution of harbours shows a clear concentration in areas with the best fishing grounds, such as the Reykjanes and Snæfellsnes peninsulas and the Westfjords. Undoubtedly the centre of the Icelandic trade was the harbour of Hafnarfjörður, which was in hands of Hamburg merchants who sailed there each year with two ships, each with up to 70 persons on board. About a quarter to a third of all Hamburg merchants active in the North Atlantic each year were present in Hafnarfjörður. In the 1530s, they constructed a church there, which also served as a community centre, and in which they installed their own preachers. In Shetland, many harbours are known as well, but information about their use is more limited due to the lack of a licence system.

The last part of this study focusses on the position of the North Atlantic merchants in their German home towns and is divided into three subsections, the first focusing on formal organisations to which the North Atlantic merchants belonged, the second on the organisational forms of the trade proper, and the third on the social structure and social position of the community of North Atlantic merchants.

With regards to the formal structures, the most important socioeconomic institutions in late medieval German cities were societies of merchants trading in a specific region (*Fahrergesellschaften*) and religious confraternities (*Bruderschaften*), which also existed for specific merchant communities. The latter were essentially religious organisations, which among other functions provided social security for its members. These institutions were crucial venues for the building of networks, information exchange, social prestige and trust among the associated merchants. In Hamburg, many North Atlantic merchants were members of the societies of England and Scania merchants, of which the former was especially prominent in

the early stages of the Icelandic trade, due to the importance of the stockfish export to England. However, a separate society of Iceland merchants was never founded, and the relations with the society of England merchants remained close. By contrast, there existed a Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants, which included merchants with the Faroes and Shetland. After the Reformation, the confraternity focussed on providing social security to its members, for which donations were made from the persons on ships returning from the North Atlantic. Moreover, the confraternity was likely responsible for building and running the church in Hafnarfjörður.

In Bremen, there existed no such formal organisations for the North Atlantic merchants, but a closer look at the sources suggests that many of the same structures as in Hamburg were in place. Bremen did not have separate *Fahrergesellschaften* until 1550; instead, a number of North Atlantic merchants did serve as eldermen of the *gemene kopman*, a society that represented the interests of the merchant community in the city. A confraternity specifically of North Atlantic merchants did not exist, but the 1545 foundation document of the *Haus Seefahrt*, a poor-relief institution for seafarers, mentions that it had been usual as in Hamburg for ships returning from the North Atlantic to make donations for religious and charitable services.

With regards to the organisation of the trade itself, the defining institution was the *maschup* or *mascopey*, a form of company in which a number of persons provided the capital and were liable for each other. This was a typical kind of company in the sixteenth-century Hanseatic network. The skipper was often the operational head of the enterprise abroad, and as such was a key figure: he was invested with certain powers, such as the right to exclude others from the *maschup*. The *maschup* structure allowed some partners to stay at home and conduct their business from their offices, leaving the actual execution of the trade to their business partners. Although it has been assumed that the North Atlantic trade was old-fashioned in this respect, and a typical skipper's trade, it has been shown that this is not the case by far. An estimated third to a half of the persons involved in the trading companies were not actually sailing north themselves at a given point in time. Usually these persons had sailed to the North Atlantic themselves earlier in their career, and conducted business from their homes later.

These persons also include a number of prominent capital-rich merchants with trade interests in other regions, who usually had close connections to the Danish court or Danish merchants. Some of them acted as Danish factors in Hamburg or Lübeck, and their involvement in the North Atlantic trade seems to have grown considerably in the late sixteenth century. From the case study of Luder Ottersen, a Lübeck merchant and later Danish factor who was one of the

most important figures in the North Atlantic trade at this time, it is possible to get a glimpse of the widespread connections between merchants all the involved towns, as well as in Denmark.

With regards to the social structure and status of the communities of North Atlantic merchants in Bremen and Hamburg, it is clear that most were active in one region only, which can probably be attributed to the importance of personal networks in the North Atlantic trade. Furthermore, the records of the confraternity in Hamburg show the importance of family relations, as up to three generations of one family can be seen to have been active in the North Atlantic trade, often in the same region. This made room for the involvement of women in the North Atlantic trade as well, as there are many examples of wives of North Atlantic merchants who assumed responsibility for their husband's business in his absence or continued the business after his death, often in cooperation with his former trading partners.

If we take a group of merchants' degree of involvement in the governments of late medieval and early modern German cities as burgomasters and city councillors as a sign of their social standing, the Hamburg North Atlantic merchants must have ranked among the lowest social echelons of the city's merchant class. The situation in Bremen was very different: there a significantly larger percentage of North Atlantic merchants served as burgomasters and councillors. The difference between the two cities, however, could very well be caused by a source bias. Bremen political office-holders usually were not involved in the direct trade, instead participating as investors and shareholders. As the assessment of the Hamburg situation depends in large part on the records of the confraternity, which concentrate on the persons who actually sailed themselves, the investors in the background might remain largely invisible there.

Taken together, the sources have shown that the North Atlantic trade was everything else but old-fashioned or backward. The situation in the North Atlantic had its own dynamics, shaped by environmental conditions and political attitudes quite distinct from those of the North Sea and Baltic parts of the Hanseatic trade network. Most notably, the physical distance coupled with the crossing of the open ocean, the absence of towns, the reliance on barter trade, and the absence of permanent German agents on the islands posed distinct challenges to the merchants, which they overcame largely through the reliance on informal social networks. From a comparative point of view, the Faroes, Shetland, and Iceland each had their own dynamics, but the factors sketched above were at play across the region, and trade was conducted largely in the same way, although Shetland was a bit more exceptional because of difference in political overlordship.

However, seen from an organisational and social point of view, the North Atlantic trade was anything but exceptional. Organisational structures were largely similar to what was standard in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the merchants were no separate group, but well embedded within the social and commercial structures of their home towns. Moreover, the relations between merchants from various towns were manifold and also included Danish merchants, who became ever more important towards the end of the sixteenth century in the Icelandic trade. Therefore, the North Atlantic trade was a well-integrated part of the late medieval and early modern commercial structure in the Hanseatic network.

9 Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Obwohl die Hauptlinien des deutschen Handels mit den nordatlantischen Inseln Island, den Färöern und den Shetland-Inseln im späten 15. und 16. Jahrhundert grob bekannt waren, fehlte es bisher an einer sozialwirtschaftlichen Perspektive. Diese Arbeit greift diese auf und stellt sich die Frage nach der Organisation des Handels, sowohl auf den Inseln als auch in den norddeutschen Städten (hauptsächlich Hamburg und Bremen). Diese Frage ist wichtig, weil der nordatlantische Handel im hansischen Vergleich oft als altmodisch dargestellt wurde, da der Kaufmann noch selbst seine Waren in den Norden begleitete. Dies wurde als Gegensatz zu den spätmittelalterlichen hansischen Großkaufleuten gesehen, die ihren Handel schriftlich verwalteten ohne selbst zu reisen.

Die treibende Kraft hinter den direkten Handelsbeziehungen deutscher Kaufleute mit den nordatlantischen Inseln war die große Nachfrage nach haltbarem Fisch in Kontinentaleuropa. Im Nordatlantik entstand daher eine exportorientierte Fischerei, wo vor allem Stockfisch – gefriergetrockneter Fisch, hauptsächlich Dorsch – hergestellt wurde. Zudem war die Herstellung von getrocknetem Fisch unter Zugabe von importiertem Salz wichtig, dessen Bedeutung im Laufe der Jahrhunderte vor allem in Shetland zunahm. Andere nordatlantischen Waren waren *Wadmal* (ein roher Wollstoff), Butter, Schwefel und Falken, wobei die letzten zwei Produkte nur in Island von Bedeutung waren. Von insularer Seite bestand eine große Nachfrage nach vielen kontinentalen Waren: Nahrungsmitteln wie Bier und Getreide, Woll- und Leinenstoffen, Bauholz, Eisen und Fertigwaren wie Werkzeugen und Kleidung.

Aus politischer Sicht prägten zwei Faktoren die nordatlantischen Verhältnisse grundlegend: Die Stellung der nordatlantischen Inseln als *skattlande* (‚Schatzländer') der norwegischen (später: dänischen) Könige und die Rolle der Stadt Bergen als Stapelmarkt für die Schatzländer. Die Privilegien des hansischen Kontors in Bergen untersagten den direkten Handel mit den Inseln für hansische Kaufleute. Diese Situation veränderte sich im frühen 15. Jahrhundert, als die Engländer anfingen in Island zu handeln und zu fischen. Die deutschen Kaufleute, für die England ein wichtiger Absatzmarkt für Stockfisch war, versuchten diese Konkurrenz zu unterbinden und stellten auch direkte Verbindungen mit Island her.

Eine neue Auswertung der Quellen hat jedoch gezeigt, dass diese Reaktion langsam und zögerlich stattfand. Obwohl es Belege für Kaufleute aus Hamburg, Danzig oder Lübeck im Nordatlantik vor 1468 gibt, sind diese eher als Einzelfälle zu betrachten und nicht als Zeichen häufiger Handelsbeziehungen. Für die Hanse war das Thema jedoch von grundlegender Bedeutung, da der nordatlantische Direkthandel der Stellung der Kontore schadete, die einen fundamentalen

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Baustein des hansischen Handels bildeten. Zudem war meistens bloß von der Islandfahrt die Rede; es gibt sehr wenig Belege für den direkten Handel mit Shetland und den Färöern vor 1500.

Das Jahr 1468 war der Wendepunkt in der Geschichte des Nordatlantikhandels, da König Christian I. von Dänemark den direkten deutschen Handel mit Island nach Problemen mit den Engländern in Island erlaubte, während er 1469 die Shetlandinseln an Schottland verpfändete. Ohne das Verlustrisiko von hansischen Privilegien in Bergen fingen Kaufleute, namentlich aus Hamburg und Bremen, an, engere Handelsverbindungen mit Island zu knüpfen, trotz wiederholter Beschwerden der Älterleute des Bergener Kontors, die Beschädigung des Bergener Stapels fürchteten. Überdies führte die erhöhte Präsenz hansischer Kaufleute auf Island rasch zu gewalttätigen Auseinandersetzungen mit den Engländern. In den 1520er und 1530er Jahren schafften es die Hamburger dann ihre Dominanz gegenüber den Engländern mithilfe der dänischen Autoritäten auf der Insel durchzusetzen. Um die gleiche Zeit wurde Hamburger Kaufleuten auch das Handelsmonopol für die Färöer verliehen, während die Bremer Kaufleute eine dominante Stellung im Shetlandhandel erlangten.

Ab den 1540ern versuchten die dänischen Könige, den Einfluss der Deutschen in Island zu begrenzen und den Handel der eigenen Untertanen zu fördern. Vor allem versuchten sie, das zuvor häufig missachtete Verbot der Winterlage für Deutsche in Island durchzusetzen. Namentlich König Friedrich II. führte eine Politik mit merkantilistischen Tendenzen. Im Jahr 1561 verbot er den Handel mit isländischem Schwefel und verlieh das Monopol des Schwefelhandels dem Handelshaus der Familie Loitz aus Stettin. Außerdem wurden einige Jahre später Lizenzen für einzelne isländische Häfen eingeführt. Dies hatte eine grundlegende Veränderung der Verhältnisse zufolge, zu Ungunsten der Hamburger Kaufleute auf der Insel, die jetzt mit der Präsenz dänischer Kaufleute und erhöhter Kompetition zwischen Deutschen rechnen mussten. Damit hatte der dänische König seine Kontrolle über den Islandhandel erheblich erhöht, obwohl oberflächlich gesehen deutsche Kaufleute den Handel noch immer dominierten.

Die Färöer können als Versuchsgebiet der dänischen merkantilistischen Maßnahmen betrachtet werden. Hier wurden Handelsmonopole schon seit den 1520ern verliehen. Mit dem Tod des Monopolinhabers Thomas Koppen 1553 endete der hamburgische Einfluss auf den Inseln für eine Weile. Die Rückkehr der Hamburger Kaufleute im Färöerhandel in den 1570ern erfolgte ausschließlich in der Rolle von dänischen Faktoren, oft in Kooperation mit dänischen Kaufleuten. Die hamburgische Präsenz in den Färöern endete schon in den frühen 1590ern.

König Christian IV. verbot 1601 schließlich nicht-dänischen Kaufleuten den Islandhandel ganz. Jedoch waren Hamburger Versuche, die Stadt zu einem Stapelplatz für isländische Produkte auf dem Kontinent zu machen, erfolgreich gewesen.

Zusammen mit der reichen Erfahrung und den Netzwerken der hamburgischen Kaufleute bedeutete dies eine weitere Abhängigkeit der dänischen Kaufleute von hamburgischen Islandfahrern, die von den Dänen angeheuert wurden. Auch wurden viele nordatlantische Waren weiterhin nach Hamburg ausgeführt.

Manche ehemalige Islandfahrer aus Hamburg wandten sich jetzt in zunehmendem Maße dem Shetlandhandel zu. Nach 1469 hatten sich dort auf soziokultureller und politischer Ebene vermehrt schottische Einflüsse bemerkbar gemacht. Dies hatte aber wenig Einfluss auf die Entwicklung des Handels bis in die zweite Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts, als merkantilistische Tendenzen dann auch spürbar wurden im Shetlandhandel. Durch unterschiedliche Faktoren wie Seuchen, Wirtschaftskrisen, zunehmende Konkurrenz der schottischen Landbesitzer, Verunsicherung der Schifffahrt durch Seekriege, aber vor allem durch die stetigen Zollerhöhungen wurde der Islandhandel immer weniger attraktiv für deutsche Kaufleute. Er kam zu einem definitiven Ende mit der *Treaty of the Union* in 1707, die ausländischen Schiffen die Einfuhr von Salz verbot, das so wichtig für die Herstellung des shetländischen Salzfisches war.

Der prägende Faktor für die Beziehungen zwischen deutschen Kaufleuten und deren Handelspartnern im Nordatlantik war die große geografische Entfernung und das Verbot der dauerhaften Niederlassung in Island, die einen ständigen Informationsaustausch und die Kontrolle über den nordatlantischen Markt erschwerten.

An zentraler Stelle in den Beziehungen zwischen Deutschen und Inselbewohnern standen Kreditgeschäfte. In Island und den Färöern bestand ein Kreditsystem, in dem örtliche Handelspartner Waren auf Kredit kauften, die sie im folgenden Jahr in Stockfisch zurückbezahlten. Das System war aus Bergen übernommen worden, wo die Kaufleute den Stockfischproduzenten Kredit erteilten um sie an sich zu binden, wobei der Vorteil für die Stockfischproduzenten darin bestand, dass sie auch in schlechten Zeiten von einer ständigen Versorgung versichert waren. Für Shetland gibt es wenige Belege für ein Kreditsystem wie in Norwegen, Island oder den Färöern, obwohl Kreditgeschäfte in beide Richtungen häufig vorkamen.

Obwohl das Kreditsystem in Island wie in Norwegen existierte, gab es grundlegende Unterschiede zwischen beiden Regionen. In Island durften die Kaufleute frei herumreisen und konnten ihre Schuldner Zuhause besuchen, was die Eintreibung der Schulden vereinfachte. Andererseits waren Isländer nicht an einem Kaufmann gebunden und konnten deswegen komplizierte Schuldverhältnisse zu mehreren Kaufleuten haben. Der essentielle Unterschied war hierbei die Abwesenheit eines Kontors der Kaufleute, der die Kreditverhältnisse kontrollierte. Eine wichtige Rolle spielten daher informelle soziale Netzwerke, die Vertrauen förderten und damit die Rückbezahlung der Schulden in den meisten Fällen garantierten.

Die Kaufleute benutzten unterschiedliche Methoden um diese Netzwerke zu gründen und zu pflegen. Der erlaubte Winteraufenthalt der jungen Kaufleute, um die Sprache und Sitten ihrer zukünftigen Kunden kennenzulernen, war dabei sehr wichtig. Zudem boten die Kaufleute den Isländern neben Kreditverschaffung sonstige Dienstleistungen wie die Ausstattung mit Fischerbooten und den Besuch von Kunden zu Hause. Auf den Handelsschiffen reisten auch deutsche Barbiere/Wundärzte, die ihre Dienste auch der örtlichen Bevölkerung anboten. Manche Beziehungen mit Inselbewohnern waren weiterführend. Die häufigen Schiffsverbindungen zwischen Deutschland und Island funktionierten als Fähren für Isländer, die zum Festland reisen wollten. Manche dieser Isländer ließen sich in Hamburg nieder, wo sie hamburgische Frauen heirateten, die oft aus den Familien der Islandfahrer stammten. Diese Personen waren oft selbst auch im Handel in Zusammenarbeit mit den deutschen Kaufleuten tätig. Das Phänomen ist auch für Shetland belegt.

Ein wichtiger Faktor war auch die Beziehungen zu den lokalen Autoritäten, besonders im Fall von Kreditproblemen oder Konflikten zwischen Kaufleuten. Auf allen Inseln hatten ausländische Kaufleute Zugang zu den lokalen Gerichten, in Island vor allem zum Althing, dem zentralen Versammlungsort, wo deutsche Kaufleute regelmäßig vertreten waren. In Shetland waren Kaufleute sowohl auf den lokalen Gerichten als auch auf dem zentralen Gericht in Scalloway anzutreffen. Auf den Färöern war die Beziehung der Kaufleute zu den örtlichen Machthabern am engsten, da die Kaufleute die Inseln verliehen bekamen und damit auch für die Steuereinnahmen verantwortlich waren. In Island sind einige Beispiele von deutschen Kaufleuten belegt, die politische Ämter im späten 16. Jahrhundert innehatten, vor allem in der Rolle des *sýslumaður* (lokaler Verwaltungsbeamter) in bestrittenen Gegenden wie Snæfellsnes oder den Ostfjorden. Dies ermöglichte eine direkte Kontrolle über die Handelssituation vor Ort. Schließlich pflegten deutsche Kaufleute gute Beziehungen zu den örtlichen Kirchen, die auch von zentraler Bedeutung für den Handel waren. Dies äußerte sich in Schenkungen der Kaufleute an unterschiedlichen Kirchen und die Bestattung gestorbener Kaufleute auf den örtlichen Friedhöfen. Dies verband die Kaufleute mit den lokalen Gemeinschaften über die Grenzen des Jenseits hinaus.

Der Fokus der Handels- und sozialen Aktivitäten im Nordatlantikhandel waren die Handelsstationen, da urbane Zentren auf den Inseln fehlten. Diese bestanden oft aus einer geschützten Bucht als Anlegeplatz für das Handelsschiff, in dessen Nähe Buden an Land gebaut wurden. Diese Buden funktionierten als Laden und Speicherplatz, auch für die Lagerung unverkaufter Waren im Winter. Sie wurden meist in der lokalen Bautradition, also mit Wänden aus Grassoden und Dächern aus Holz, gebaut. In Shetland wurden Buden oft aus Stein gebaut, was auf die Beabsichtigung einer längeren Nutzung hindeutet.

Dies kann damit zu tun haben, dass Buden oft auf Kosten der Grundbesitzer gebaut und an deutschen Kaufleuten vermietet oder verkauft wurden.

Eine detaillierte Untersuchung zu den unterschiedlichen isländischen Häfen war anhand des Lizenzsystems in Island möglich. Es wurden über 30 unterschiedliche Häfen identifiziert, die von deutschen Kaufleuten benutzt wurden. Die Verteilung der Häfen zeigt deutliche Schwerpunkte in Regionen mit guten Fischgründen, wie den Reykjanes- und Snæfellsnes-Halbinseln und den Westfjorden. Das Zentrum des Islandhandels schlechthin war dabei der Hafen Hafnarfjörður. Er wurde von Hamburg aus mit zwei Schiffen jährlich besegelt, jedes mit bis zu 70 Personen an Bord. Es wurde gezeigt, dass etwa ein Viertel bis Drittel aller Hamburger Nordatlantikfahrer in jedem Jahr in Hafnarfjörður aktiv war, wo sie auch eine Kirche gebaut hatten. In Shetland sind auch viele Häfen bekannt, aber eine tiefgehende Analyse derer Nutzung ist aufgrund des nicht vorhandenen Lizenzsystems und des daraus resultierenden Quellenmangels nicht möglich.

Die Analyse der Organisation des nordatlantischen Handels in den norddeutschen Städten ist dreiteilig erfolgt: erstens wurden die formellen sozialen Organisationen untersucht, in denen die Kaufleute sich zusammensetzten, zweitens die Organisationsformen des Handels selbst und drittens die soziale Struktur und Position der Gemeinschaft der Nordatlantikfahrer.

Die bedeutendsten sozialen Strukturen für Kaufleute in spätmittelalterlichen deutschen Städten waren Fahrergesellschaften (Organisationen von Kaufleuten in einer bestimmten Region) und religiöse Bruderschaften, die auch Sozialhilfe leisteten. Deren Funktionen sind jedoch nicht immer klar trennbar, und beide Arten der Kooperationen funktionierten als wichtige Orte für den Ausbau sozialer Netzwerke, Informationsaustausch, soziales Prestige und Vertrauen unter den Kaufleuten. In Hamburg waren die Nordatlantikfahrer Mitglieder mehrerer Gesellschaften, besonders der Englandfahrer wegen der Bedeutung Englands als Absatzmarkt für isländischen Stockfisch, vor allem in der frühen Phase des Islandshandels. Eine separate Gesellschaft der Nordatlantikfahrer wurde nie gegrundet, dafür gab es aber eine St.-Annenbruderschaft der Islandfahrer, deren Mitgliedschaft hauptsächlich bestand aus den Kaufleuten, die selbst in den Norden segelten, und woran auch die Shetland- und Färöerfahrer Teil hatten. Das Sozialhilfeprogramm für die Mitglieder der Bruderschaft wurde nach der Reformation aus Spenden der Mitfahrenden auf den zurückkehrenden Schiffen aus dem Nordatlantik bezahlt.

Keine solchen Organisationen der Nordatlantikhändler existierten in Bremen, aber ein genauerer Blick auf die Quellen deutet darauf hin, dass hier ähnliche Strukturen wie in Hamburg, jedoch weniger ausgeprägt, bestanden. Einige Bremer Kaufleute im Handel mit Shetland und Island sind zusätzlich als Ältermänner des

gemenen kopmans bekannt, eine Organisation die die gemeinsamen Interessen der bremischen Kaufmannschaft vertrat. Die Gründungsurkunde des Hauses Seefahrt, eine Sozialhilfeeinstellung für Seefahrer aus 1545, erwähnt zudem, dass die Personen auf zurückkehrenden Schiffen aus dem Nordatlantik üblicherweise für religiöse und karitative Zwecken spendeten.

Der Handel selbst wurde meist in Handelsgesellschaften organisiert, die *maschup* oder *mascopey* genannt wurden, eine typische Form der Handelsorganisation im Hanseraum im 16. Jahrhundert. In einer *maschup* brachten verschiedene Personen das Kapital ein und hafteten für die gemeinsame Unternehmung. Die Teilnehmer waren oft auch Partenreeder im Schiff der Gesellschaft, obwohl die genaue Konstruktion meistens nicht rekonstruierbar ist. Der Schiffer war der Kapitalführer und daher eine wichtige Figur in der *maschup*. Er besaß Privilegien wie zum Beispiel das Recht, andere Mitglieder aus der Unternehmung auszukaufen. Die *maschup* erlaubte es manchen Teilnehmern, ihren Handel aus ihrer Schreibstube zu betreiben und das tatsächliche Handelshandwerk anderen Mitgliedern der *maschup* zu überlassen. Eine Analyse der Mitglieder der Hamburger Bruderschaft hat ergeben, dass geschätzt ein Drittel bis die Hälfte der Kaufleute in den nordatlantischen Handelsgesellschaften nicht selbst in den Norden gefahren ist. Dies bietet eine neue Perspektive auf die Charakterisierung des Nordatlantikhandels als altmodischer Schifferhandel. Viele der Kaufleute waren zu Beginn ihrer Karriere im Norden aktiv und blieben später Zuhause.

Unter den wenigen Kaufleuten mit Handelsverbindungen in anderen Regionen findet man um 1500 vor allem Verbindungen mit dem Englandhandel, im späteren 16. Jahrhundert aber hauptsächlich Großkaufleute mit Beziehungen zum dänischen Hof. Einige von ihnen waren aktiv als dänischer Faktor in Hamburg oder Lübeck. Die Fallstudie über Luder Ottersen, einen Lübecker Kaufmann und dänischen Faktor, zeigt die weitgehende Vernetzung einzelner Kaufleute aus allen beteiligten deutschen Städten und Dänemark.

Aus den Untersuchungen zur sozialen Struktur der Gemeinschaften der Nordatlantikfahrer in Bremen und Hamburg wird klar, dass es nur beschränkte Schnittpunkte zwischen den Händlern in den unterschiedlichen Inselgruppen gab. Wahrscheinlich hat dies mit der Wichtigkeit persönlicher Netzwerke zu tun, die eine bestimmte zeitliche Kontinuität voraussetzte. Deswegen blieben viele Kaufleute in ihrer Karriere nach Möglichkeit nur in einer Region tätig. Außerdem zeigen die Quellen die Bedeutung der Familienverhältnisse. Bis zu drei Generationen einer Familie können im Nordatlantikhandel nachgewiesen werden, oft in der gleichen Region. Dabei spielten auch Frauen eine wichtige Rolle, die meist nach dem Tod ihrer Ehemänner seinen Handel fortzusetzen versuchten, oft in Kooperation mit seinen ehemaligen Handelspartnern.

Gemessen an der Beteiligung von Bürgermeistern und Ratsmännern im Handel im Nordatlantik befanden die Hamburger nordatlantischen Kaufleute sich in der untersten Schicht der Hamburger Kaufmannschaft. Die Situation in Bremen ist da sehr unterschiedlich, wo die Beteiligung der Bürgermeister und Ratsmänner im Nordatlantikhandel erheblich größer war. Diese Diskrepanz legt die Vermutung nahe, dass die geringe Zahl in Hamburg auf einem Quellenproblem beruht. Da sich die Analyse der Hamburger Situation für einen großen Teil auf den Akten der Islandfahrerbruderschaft stützt, wo hauptsächlich die Personen vertreten sind, die selbst in den Norden gesegelt sind, könnten die großen Kapitalgeber in den Hintergrund verschwunden sein.

Zusammengefasst war der Handel im Nordatlantik alles andere als altmodisch oder primitiv. Die Situation im Nordatlantik hatte ihre eigene Dynamik, geprägt durch die natürlichen Umstände und politischen Verhältnisse, die sehr unterschiedlich von den anderen Regionen des hansischen Netzwerks waren. Besonders die große Entfernung mit der Notwendigkeit, das offene Meer zu überqueren, die Abwesenheit von Städten, die Zentralität des Tauschhandels und die Abwesenheit einer dauerhaften deutschen Präsenz auf den Inseln stellten erhebliche Herausforderungen dar. Die Bewältigung dieser Probleme geschah auf unterschiedliche Weise, wobei informelle soziale Netzwerke eine zentrale Rolle spielten. Aus vergleichender Perspektive hatten die unterschiedlichen Inselgruppen jeweils ihre eigene Dynamik, jedoch waren die oben skizzierten Faktoren überall vergleichbar und der Handel fand in groben Zügen auf die gleiche Art und Weise statt. Lediglich die Situation auf Shetland wich hiervon aufgrund der Abwesenheit des dänischen Einflusses nach 1469 geringfügig ab.

Aus einer organisatorischen Perspektive war der Nordatlantikhandel jedoch alles andere als außergewöhnlich. Die benutzten Organisationsstrukturen waren gang und gäbe im späten 15. und 16. Jahrhundert und die Kaufleute im Handel mit dem Nordatlantik waren fest eingebettet in der Kaufmannschaft der norddeutschen Städte. Die Verhältnisse zwischen Kaufleuten unterschiedlicher Städte waren dabei vielförmig und schlossen auch dänische Kaufleute mit ein, deren Einfluss zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts erheblich zunahm. Der deutsche Handel mit den nordatlantischen Inseln war deswegen ein gut integrierter Teil der spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Handelsstruktur des hansischen Netzwerks.

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Appendix A: Licences issued for Icelandic harbours

Abbreviations: Y: Number of years; a.g.: *ad gratiam*, i.e. until further notice.

Dates and places between square brackets are not mentioned in the licence, but have been reconstructed from other sources.

Issued by Christian III (1534–1559)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1537, March 10		Helmich Schmid, Tonnies Mutter[1]	Lübeck		*DI* 10:112
1547?	Vestmannaeyjar	Joachim Wullenwever	Hamburg		SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2 (15500000HAM03)
1557, April 15 Copenhagen		Count Anthony I of Oldenburg		1	*KB* 1555–1560, p. 93; *DI* 13:140

1 On the "kravel" of Herman Vurborn.

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Issued by Frederick II (1559–1588)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1564, December 4 Nyborg	Hofsós	Hans Nielsen	Copenhagen		RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16); RAK RAL 8, f. 543v; *DI* 14:227 (15641204NYB0)
1565, February 19 Malmö	Básendar	Andres Godske, Knut Pedersen	Copenhagen		RAK RAL 8, f. 546v; *DI* 14:246 (15650219MAL00)
1565, March 5 Börringe	Ríf; Arnarstapi	Andres Jude	Copenhagen		RAK RAL 8, f. 547r; *DI* 14:249 (15650305BYR00)
1565, March 16 Börringe	Patreksfjörður; Tálknafjörður; "Billingervoge" (Bíldudalur?)	Gert Bomhofer[2]	[Copenhagen]		RAK RAL 8, f. 547v; *DI* 14:250 (15650316BYR00)
1565, August 14 Copenhagen	Dýrafjörður	Bartholomeus Tinappel	Lübeck		RAK RAL 8, f. 561v; *DI* 14:289; Ketilsson, *Forordninger* 2, pp. 58–59 (15650814KOB00)
1566, February 28 Copenhagen	Vopnafjörður	Herman Oldenseel	Lübeck	a.g.	RAK RAL 9, f.323v; *DI* 14:328 (15660228KOB01)
1566, February 28 Copenhagen	Búðir, Kumbaravogur	Birge Trolle		a.g.	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9); RAK RAL 9, f.323r; *DI* 14:327 (15660228KOB00)

2 Bomhofer was the royal sulphur refinerer ("wor suouell luterer"), but the sulphur trade was explicitly forbidden in the licence.

1566, March 3 Frederiksborg	Hafnarfjörður	Joachim Wichman	Hamburg	a.g.	RAK RAL 9, f. 323v; *DI* 14:329 (15660303FRE00)
1566, June 17 Copenhagen	Berufjörður (“Ostforde”)	Heinrich Mumme	[Copenhagen]		RAK RAL 9, f. 331r; *DI* 14:356 (15660617KOB00)
1566, June 25 Copenhagen	Keflavík	Joachim Thim	Hamburg	a.g.	RAK RAL 9, f. 332r; *DI* 14:357 (15660625KOB0)
1566, June 27 Copenhagen	Básendar	Marcus Hess	Copenhagen	a.g.	RAK RAL 9, f. 334v; *DI* 14:358 (15660627KOB00)
1567, January 2 Bygholm	Eyrarbakki; Þorlákshöfn[3]	Johan Jellesen Falckner	Amsterdam		RAK RAL 9, f. 338r; *KB* 1566–1570, p. 313; *DI* 14:401
1567, January 29 Frederiksborg	Dýrafjörður	Christof Vogler	Segeberg	a.g.	RAK RAL 9, f. 339r; SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3; *DI* 14:407 (15670129FRE00)
1567, September 9 Copenhagen	“Alnfiord wdj Issefiordsyssel” (Álftafjörður?)	Margaretha, Bartholomeus Tinappel’s widow	Lübeck		RAK RAL 9, f. 358r; *DI* 15:9 (15670909KOB00)
1567, October 31 Aarhus	Búðir	Johan Hudeman	Bremen	a.g.	RAK RAL 9, f. 361r; *DI* 15:28 (15671031AAR01)
1567, October 31 Aarhus	Kumbaravogur	Johan Munsterman	Bremen	a.g.	RAK RAL 9, f. 362r; *DI* 15:29 (15671031AAR00)

(continued)

3 The licence does not allow trading in sulphur.

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1569, March 29 Copenhagen	Básendar	Marcus Hess	Copenhagen		RAK RAL; *DI* 15:165
1569, April 2 Copenhagen	Berufjörður (“Ostforde”)	Bernd Losekanne	Bremen	a.g.	SAB 2–R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (15690402KOB00)
1570, March 29 Roskilde	Dýrafjörður	Christof Vogler	[Segeberg]		RAK RAL 10, f. 568v; *DI* 15:266 (15700329ROS00)
1571, February 21 Copenhagen	Eyrarbakki; Þorlákshöfn[4]	Johan Jellesen Falckner	Amsterdam		*KB* 1571–1575, pp. 11–12
1571, October 25 Frederiksborg	Grindavík	Claus Lude	Bremen	a.g.	SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25 (15711025FRE00)
1572, January 20 Nyborg	Eyjafjörður; Húsavík; Skagafjörður[5]	Marcus Hess	Copenhagen	4	RAK NR 1, f. 2; *NRR* II, pp. 4–5 (15720120NYB00)

4 The licence explicitly grants the right to mine metals, sulphur, copper, alum, and other raw materials in the trading district.

5 The licence explicitly grants the right to trade with sulphur.

1576, January 20 Frederiksborg	Arnarstapi; Ríf	Richard Wederbar[6]	Helsingør	3	RAK NR 1, f. 136v; *NRR* II, 1p. 79; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 5
1576, February 25 Frederiksborg	Hafnarfjörður; Vopnafjörður	Marcus Hess	Copenhagen	3	RAK NR 1, f. 137v; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 15–16
1576, March 26	All harbours formerly in use by Hamburg, except for Hafnarfjörður, Vopnafjörður, Arnarstapi, and Ríf.		Stade		RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860000XXX01)
1577, April 27 Frederiksborg			Buxtehude	1	RAK NR 1, f. 162r; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 177
1577, May 3 Frederiksborg	Berufjörður ("Ostforde" or "Pappie")	Christoffer Meyer[7]	Bremen		RAK D11, Pakke 25 (15770503FRE00)
1577, May 15 [Frederiksborg]	Ísafjörður; Álftafjörður		Stade	6	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860000XXX01)
1577, October 10 Antvorskov	Southern Iceland	Duke Adolf of Holstein-Gottorp		1	RAK NR 1, f. 182v; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 246

(continued)

6 Used by Hans Gronewold from Hamburg before. Duty-free, but if Wederbar wants to keep using it after the three years, he will have to pay the same tolls and customs as others.

7 Transferred by request of the Bremen town council from Bernd Losekanne.

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1578, March 23 Frederiksborg	Eyrarbakki; Þorlákshöfn	Luder Ottersen, Jørgen Kydt		10	RAK NR 1, f. 203v; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 325
1578, March 23 Frederiksborg	Arnarstapi; Ríf; Grundarfjörður	Marcus Hess	Copenhagen		RAK NR 1, f. 204r; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 326
1579, May 23 Kronborg	Hólmur; Hafnarfjörður; Straumur; Vatnsleysa; Keflavík; Básendar	Johan Bockholt	Iceland		RAK NR 1, f. 266v; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 651
1579, December 11 Skanderborg	Kumbaravogur	Joachim Kolling	Hooksiel		NLO, Best. 20, –25, no. 6; RAK NR 1, f. 291v; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 791 (15791211SKA00)
1579, December 12 Skanderborg	Dýrafjörður; Skutulsfjörður	Eggert Hannesson			RAK NR 1, f. 291v; *NRR* II, p. 366; *KB* 1576–1579, p. 791
1579, December 14 Skanderborg	Flatey	Hinrick Sluter	Lübeck		RAK NR 1, f. 292r; *NRR* II, p. 366; *KB* 1576–1479, p. 793
1580, March 25 Kolding	Hofsós	Guðbrandur Þorláksson	Iceland		*KB* 1580–1483, pp. 44–45; Aðils, *Monopolhandel*, 59
1583, April 18 Haderslev	Patreksfjörður	Luder Ottersen	Lübeck	3	*KB* 1580–1583, p. 660.

1584, March 17	Básendar; Þórshöfn	Peter Hutt, Claus Rademan, Heinrich Thomsen	Wilster	a.g.	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860000XXX01)
1584, May 3 Skanderborg	Nesvogur; Grundarfjörður	Prince-Archbishop Henry III of Bremen	Bremen		SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15840503SKA00)
1585, March 18 Kronborg	Kumbaravogur	Count John VII of Oldenburg	Oldenburg		NLO Best. 20, –25, no. 6 (15850318KRO00)
1585, June 17 Copenhagen	Nesvogur; Grundarfjörður	Count John VII of Oldenburg	Oldenburg	a.g.	NLO Best. 20, –25, no. 6 (15850617KOB00)
[Winter 1585/86][8]	Flatey	Carsten Bake	Bremen	[4]	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15890704HAM01; 15921231BRE00); Pakke 25; SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15930228BRE01)
1586, January 21 Kronborg	Hólmur	Hans Delmenhorst[9]	Lübeck	10	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 22/23) (15860121KRO00)

(continued)

8 According to Carsten Bake, he received the licence for four years in 1583, after which it was granted to an Icelander. He subsequently received a licence for Hólmur. However, the licence for Flatey was issued to Páll Jónsson (the Icelander) in September 1589, which fits better with a request of Hamburg merchants for a licence for Flatey in 1589, in which it is stated that Carsten Bake had been sailing to Flatey since 1586.
9 Renewal of a previous licence.

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Arnarstapi	Ambrosius Loring	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860213HAM00)
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Ríf	Bernd Salefeld	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860213HAM00)
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Barðaströnd / Vatneyri	Hans von Kleve	Hamburg	[4]	
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Hofsós	Matthias Eggers	Hamburg	[4]	
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Vopnafjörður	Cordt Botker, Paul Lindeman[10]	Hamburg	2	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860213HAM00); Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15871021HAM00)
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Hornafjörður (“Ostfriedenes”)	Joachim Focke	Hamburg	2	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860213HAM00); Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15871021HAM02)

10 The request was for two separate licences, with tolls to be paid for both.

1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Eyrarbakki; Þorlákshöfn[11]	Herman Wegener	Hamburg	[4]	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860213HAM00)
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Hafnarfjörður	Joachim Valeman	Hamburg	[5]	
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Hafnarfjörður	Hans Temmerman	Hamburg	[5]	
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Básendar	Jurgen Grove	Hamburg	[4]	
1586, February 19 [Kronborg]	Grindavík	Bernd Osthoff	Hamburg	2	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (ad Suppl. II, 25) (15860213HAM00); Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15871021HAM01)
1586, February 19 Kronborg	Keflavík	Hans van Hutlen	Hamburg	4[12]	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15860219KRO00); Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, no. 18a) (15891112HAM01)
1586, February 19 Kronborg	Ísafjörður; Skutulsfjörður	Barteld Elers, Cordt Tacke[13]	Hamburg	4	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15860219KRO01)

(continued)

11 The harbours were combined because of the poor fish catches in the area.

12 A 1589 request for renewal of this licence states that the licence was valid for six years. This must be a misinterpretation by the scribe.

13 Two copies of this licence were issued.

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1586, February 19 Kronborg[14]	Skagaströnd	Ratke Timmerman	Hamburg	4	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15860219KRO02)
[Winter 1587/88]	Hornafjörður ("Ostfriedenes")	Joachim Focke	Hamburg	[2]	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II. 18a) (15871109HAM00; 15871109HAM02; 15900125HAM00)
[Winter 1587/88]	Vopnafjörður	Paul Lindeman	Hamburg	[2]	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15871021HAM00; 15891025HAM00; 15900102HAM00)
[Beginning of 1588]	Grindavík	Bernd Osthoff	Hamburg	[2]	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15890822HAM00, 15890822HAM01)
[1588, December 18] Copenhagen	Ríf	Bernd Salefeld	Hamburg	1	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15881228KOB00)
[1588, December 18] Copenhagen	Arnarstapi[15]	Ambrosius Loring	Hamburg	1	

14 Corrected later to the 1590 licence for Peter Sivers.

15 These were not real licences, but rather documentation of permission granted by treasurer Christoffer Valckendorf to trade for one more year because the old licences were expired, but new ones could not be issued yet.

Issued by Christian IV (1588–1648)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1589, June	Ríf	Bernd Salefeld	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15891108HAM00)
1589, June 10[16] Copenhagen	Þórshöfn (Langanes)	Cordt Basse, Hans Hering, Hans Schomaker	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15890610KOB00); Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15890512HAM01)
1589, June 20 Copenhagen	Berufjörður (Djúpivogur)	Daniel Elers	Hamburg		RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15890620KOB00)
1589, September 12 [Copenhagen]	Flatey	Carsten Bake[17]	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9) (15890912EUT00); Pakke 25 (Suppl. II, 15) (15921231BRE00); SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15930228BRE01)
1589, September 25 Copenhagen	Flatey	Páll Jónsson	Iceland	4	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15890925KOB00)
1589, September 26 Copenhagen	Berufjörður (“Ostforde”)	Marten Losekanne	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16) (15890926KOB00)
1589, September 26 [Copenhagen]	Búðir	Johan Hudeman	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9) (15890915EUT00)

(continued)

16 A note on the back of the request for this licence gives 6 June as the date.

17 It is not certain that Bake actually received the licence; two weeks later, a licence for the same harbour was granted to Páll Jónsson.

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1589, September 26 [Copenhagen]	Vatnsleysa	Johan Schroder	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9) (15890915EUT00)
1589, October 22 Copenhagen	Grindavík	Bernd Osthoff	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15890822HAM00)
1589, December 3 Copenhagen	Keflavík	Hans van Hutlen	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15891203KOB00)
1589, December 3 Copenhagen	Ísafjörður; Skutulsfjörður	Barteld Elers, Cordt Tacke	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15891203KOB01)
1589, December 3 Copenhagen	Arnarstapi	Ambrosius Loring	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15891203KOB02)
1589, December 3 Copenhagen	Ríf	Bernd Salefeld	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 7) (15840000KOB00)
[Winter 1589/90] [Copenhagen]	Vopnafjörður	Paul Lindeman	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15920218HAM00)
[Beginning of 1590][18]	Hólmur	Carsten Bake	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15930000XXX00; 15921231BRE00)

18 According to Carsten Bake, he received the licence in 1588, but according to Luder Ottersen, who had traded in the harbour along with Bake the two years prior, Bake received the licence in 1590. See also Bake's licence for Flatey, 1585/86.

[1590]	Lón	Friedrich Tilebare	Bremen		RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00); Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15901014BRE00, 15901104KOL01)
1590, January 28 Copenhagen	Básendar	Jurgen Schinckel[19]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15900128KOB00)
1590, January 29 Copenhagen	Skagaströnd	Peter Sivers	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15900129KOB00)
1590, January 29 Copenhagen	Barðaströnd / Vatneyri	Hans von Kleve	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15900129KOB01)
1590, January 29 Copenhagen	Ríf	Hans Hase[20]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15900129KOB02)
1590, January 29 Copenhagen	Hofsós	Matthias Eggers	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15891206HAM00; 15891206HAM01)
1590, March 8 Copenhagen	Hornafjörður ("Ostfriedenes")	Joachim Focke	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15900308KOB00)
1590, November 3 Kolding	Berufjörður ("Ostforde")	Marten Losekanne	Bremen	4	RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15901103KOL00)
1590, November 4 Kolding	Eyrarbakki; Þorlákshöfn	Luder Ottersen	Lübeck	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15901104KOL00)

(continued)

19 Schinckel was mentioned to have cooperated with Jurgen Grove, but the licence was issued in Schinckel's name only.

20 Bernd Salefeld was trading in the harbour; Hase claimed that it could be used by two ships. However, a note on the back indicates it was suspected that Salefeld was already sending two ships, so that the licence was cancelled until further notice.

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1590, November 5 Kolding	Hafnarfjörður	Hans Holtgreve	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15901105KOL00)
1590, [November 5] [Kolding]	Hafnarfjörður	Hans Jaspers	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15931024HAM00)
1592, January 4 Copenhagen	Berufjörður ("Ostforde")	Marten Losekanne	Bremen	4	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15920104KOB00)
1592, February 10	Hrútafjörður[21]	Laurens Schroder, [Jochim Holste]	Hamburg		RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a) (15920211KOB00, 15920307HAM00); Pakke 25: (15940000HAM00)
1592, March 24 Copenhagen	Þórshöfn (Langanes)	Cordt Basse, Hans Hering, Hans Schomaker	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15920324KOB00)
1592, [March 24] [Copenhagen]	Vopnafjörður	[Cordt Basse, Hans Hering, Hans Schomaker, Hans Lindeman]	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15941104HAM00)
1592, May 19 Copenhagen	Búðir	Johan Hudeman, Friedrich Koster	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15920519KOB00)
1592, October 1 Antvorskov	Arnarstapi	Ambrosius Loring	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15921001ANT00)

21 The licence was never used after Peter Sivers, who had a licence for Skagaströnd, complained that Hrútafjörður was too near to his harbour.

1592, November 16 Copenhagen	Grindavík	Paul Barnefeld[22]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15921116KOB00)
1592, November 18	Hólmur	Luder Ottersen	Lübeck	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 7) (15840000KOB00)
1592, December 4	Hofsós	Matthias Eggers	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15950822HAM00)
1593, January 1 Copenhagen	Ísafjörður; Skutulsfjörður	Barteld Elers, Roleff Eys[23]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15930101KOB00)
1593, January 1 Copenhagen	Básendar	Reimer Ratkens	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15930101KOB01)
1593, January 1 Copenhagen	Barðaströnd / Vatneyri	Hans von Kleve	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15930101KOB02)
1593, January 2 Copenhagen	Hornafjörður ("Ostfriedenes")	Joachim Focke	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15930102KOB00)
1593, March 2 Copenhagen	Skagaströnd	Peter Sivers[24]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15930302KOB00)
1593, March 2 Copenhagen	Keflavík	Hans van Hutlen	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15930302KOB01)

(continued)

22 The name of Hans Steinkamp is added in pencil.

23 There were two copies of the licence because each sailed in his own ship.

24 Changed in pencil to: "Jurgen Vilters" and "erben seligen Peter Sivers nachgelassene witwen".

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1593, April 27 Copenhagen	Nesvogur; Landey	Carsten Bake[25]	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15930427KOB00)
1593, October 9 Kolding	Flatey	Berndt Jonß / Björn Jónsson[26]	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15931009KOL00)
1593, November 12 Kolding	Hafnarfjörður	Hans Holtgreve	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15961022HAM00)
1593, November 12 Kolding	Hafnarfjörður	Hans Jaspers	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15961022HAM00)
1594, October	Berufjörður (Djúpivogur)	Daniel Elers	Hamburg	3	Note on the back of the previous licence (1589)
1594, November 8 Copenhagen	Þórshöfn (Langanes)	Cordt Basse, Hans Hering	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15941104HAM00)
1594, November 8 Copenhagen	Vopnafjörður	Cordt Basse, Hans Hering, Jacob Winock	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15941104HAM00)
1595, July 11 Copenhagen	Hofsós	Albert Sivers, Hans Eggers	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15980828HAM00)

25 A note on the back states that the harbour will be given to the count of Oldenburg after the licence expires.
26 A note on the back states that Berndt died in 1596, and that the harbour was given to Danish subjects.

1595, December 10 Aarhus	Keflavík	Hans van Hutlen	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15951210AAR00)
1595, December 15 Aarhus	Skagaströnd	Jurgen Vilter	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15981108HAM00)
1595, December 20 [Aarhus]	Básendar	Reimer Ratkens	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15990203HAM01)
[Winter 1595/96]	Grindavík	[Hans Steinkamp, Bernd Osthoff]	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15951118HAM00; 15980725HAM00; 15980623HAM00)
[Winter 1595/96]	Stykkishólmur	Heinrich Alberts, Albert Kote	Bremen	[3]	NLO Best. 20, -25, no. 6 (15970300OLD00; 15970404KOB00)
[Winter 1595/96?]	Grundarfjörður	Prince-archbishop John Adolf of Bremen	Bremen		NLO, Best. 20, -25, no. 6 (15960329FRE00)
[Winter 1595/96]	Ísafjörður; Skutulsfjörður	Barteld Elers, Roleff Eys	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15951125HAM01)
1596, January 23 Aarhus	Flatey	Klaus Ericksen	Copenhagen, Helsingør	3	RAK NR 2, f. 279v; *KB* 1593–1596, pp. 576-577
1596, January 3 Skanderborg	Berufjörður ("Ostforde"; Fýluvogur)	Johan Oldenbuttel, Marten Losekanne, Johan Reineke's widow	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15960102SKA00)
1596, February 19 Kolding	Straumur; Vatnsleysa	[Rotman Pöner, Cordt Wemeyer, Jacob Hambrock, Herman Kopman]	Rendsburg, Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15980921HAM00)

(continued)

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1596, April 1 Copenhagen	Hornafjörður (“Ostfriedenes”)	Joachim Focke	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15960401KOB00)
1596, April 1 Copenhagen	Langanes	Joachim Focke	Hamburg	3	SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 3 (15960401KOB02)
1596, April 1 Copenhagen	Nesvogur; Kumbaravogur	Count John VII of Oldenburg	Oldenburg	3	NLO, Best. 20, – 25, no. 6 (15960401KOB01)
1597, March 18 Copenhagen	Hafnarfjörður	Hans Holtgreve	Hamburg	1	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15970318KOB00)
1597, March 18 Copenhagen	Hafnarfjörður	Joachim Hare[27]	Hamburg	1	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15970318KOB01)
1597, October 28 Haderslev	Hafnarfjörður	Hans Holtgreve	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (16000828HAM00)
1597, October 28 Haderslev	Hafnarfjörður	Joachim Hare	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (16000828HAM01)
[1597] [Haderslev]	Hrútafjörður	Jurgen van Winsen, [Daniel Elers]	Hamburg	[3]	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00); Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15971115ITZ00)

27 Hans Jaspers, Hare’s deceased partner, had previously held the licence.

1598, January 7 Haderslev	Eyrarbakki	Luder Ottersen	Lübeck	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15980107HAD00)
1598, January 17 Haderslev	Vopnafjörður	Cordt Basse, Hans Hering, Jacob Winock	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15980117HAD00)
1598, January 17 Haderslev	Þórshöfn (Langanes)	Cordt Basse, Hans Hering	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 28 (Suppl. II, 25) (15980117HAD01)
1598, June 20 Copenhagen	Berufjörður (Djúpivogur)	Jacob Fincke[28]	Flensburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 9) (15980620KOB00)
1598, April 22 Copenhagen	Eyjafjörður[29]	Søren Andersen, Christen Vibbe, Mikkel Vibbe, Søren Ingemand, Jacob Brender, Johan Egendorf, Peder Andersen	Copenhagen	4	RAK NR 3, f. 82v; *KB* 1596–1602, pp. 267-268
1598, April 24 Copenhagen	Flatey	Johan Vogit	Bremen	3	RAK NR 3, f. 83v; *KB* 1596–1602, p. 268
1598, September 27 Copenhagen	Straumur; Vatnsleysa	Hans van Hutlen, Jacob Hambrock, Rotman Pöner, Herman Kopman[30]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (15980927KOB00)

(continued)

28 Daniel Elers from Hamburg, who was deceased, had previously traded in the harbour.

29 Tolls were to be paid in money and sulphur.

30 Names were changed twice: in the original version, they are Hans and Rotman Pöner from Rendsburg, Cordt Wemeyer, Jacob Hambrock, Hinrich Ratkens, and skipper Joachim Hare from Hamburg; in the second, they are Jacob Hambrock, Cordt Moller, and Dirick Berman.

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1598, September 27 [Copenhagen]	Hofsós	Albert Sivers, Hans Eggers	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00)
1598, September 28[Copenhagen]	Ísafjörður; Skutulsfjörður	Barteld Elers, Conradt Johansen	Hamburg	3	
1598, September 28 [Copenhagen]	Barðaströnd / Vatneyri	Hans von Kleve, Claus von Kleve	Hamburg	3	
1598, September 28 [Copenhagen]	Búðir	Johan Hudeman, Cordt Walleman	[Bremen][31]	3	
1598, September 28 [Copenhagen]	Stykkishólmur	Heinrich Alberts, Albert Kote	Bremen	3	
1598, October 12	Arnarstapi	Ambrosius Loring	Hamburg	3	
1598, October 12	Keflavík	Hans van Hutlen	Hamburg	3	
1598, December 8	Álftafjörður	Barteld Elers, Conradt Johansen	Hamburg	3	
1598, December 8	Skagaströnd	Jurgen Vilter, Peter Sivers' widow	Hamburg	3	

31 According to the 1601 list of licences, both men were from Hamburg, but other documents mention them as Bremen citizens.

1599, January 8	Grindavík	[Hans Steinkamp, Bernd Osthoff][32]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (15980725HAM00; 15980623HAM00; 16011213HAM00); Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00)
1599, January 8	Berufjörður ("Ostforde"; Fýluvogur)	Johan Oldenbuttel, Herman Wilkens, Friedrich Tilebare	Bremen	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00)
1599, March 17	Hólmur	Luder Ottersen, Jasper van Doren	Lübeck	[3]	
1599, March 17	Básendar	Reimer Ratkens	Hamburg	3	
1599, May 4[33]	Nesvogur; Kumbaravogur	Harmen Kloppenborg	Oldenburg	1	NLO, Best. 20, – 25, no. 6 (15990504OLD00)
1599, September 12	Grundarfjörður	Johan Harvest	Segeberg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00)
1599, December 23	Nesvogur; Kumbaravogur	Count John VII of Oldenburg	Oldenburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00); NLO, Best. 20, -25, no. 6 (15991222KOB00)
1600, January 10	Eyjafjörður	Andreas Selman	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00)

(continued)

32 According to the 1601 list of harbours, the licence was issued to Hans Steinkamp and Paul Barnefeld, but the latter only used the harbour from 1583 to 1595.

33 This was not a real licence, but rather a declaration by the council of the count of Oldenburg, that his merchants were allowed to trade here despite not having a licence.

(continued)

Date and place	Harbour	Name	Home town	Y	Source
1600, January 12	Ríf	Gerd Melsow	Bergen	3	RAK NR 3, f. 128r; *KB* 1596–1602, p. 466
1600, March 14	Flatey	Bernd Salefeld	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00)
1600, October 14 Copenhagen	Straumur; Vatnsleysa	Hans van Hutlen, Jacob Hambrock, Rotman Pöner, Herman Kopman	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19) (16001014KOB00)
1600, October 14 [Copenhagen]	Hafnarfjörður	[Joachim Hare, Jacob Hambrock, Cordt Moller, Dirick Berman]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (16021129HAM00)
1600, October 14 [Copenhagen]	Hafnarfjörður	[Hans Holtgreve, Cordt Bleke, Herman Kopman, Dirick Hambrock]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (16021129HAM00)
1600, November 11[34]	Hvalfjörður	[Joachim Greve, Tonnies Rode, Hinrick Schmidt]	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b) (16021127HAM00)
1600, December 6	Þórshöfn (Langanes)	Hans Hering	Hamburg	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00)
1600, December 6	Vopnafjörður	Luder Ottersen	[Lübeck]	3	RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8) (16010000XXX00)

34 According to RAK D11, Pakke 24 (Suppl. II, 8), the licence was issued on 16 October (16010000XXX00).

Appendix B: Faroese monopoly holders

Abbreviations: Y: Number of years; a.g.: *ad gratiam*, i.e. until further notice.

Degn: Anton Degn, *Nøkur gomul, áður óprentað brøv o. a. Føroyum viðvíkjandi* (Tórshavn, 1938).

Evensen: A. C. Evensen, *Savn til Føroyinga sögu í 16. öld*. Vol. 1. (Tórshavn, 1908).

Date	Name	Place	Y	Comments	Source
[1520]	Joachim Wullenwever	Hamburg	[1]	Continued to sail regularly during the 1520s.	Evensen no. 15; *Samlinger til det norske folks sprog og historie* 2, pp. 365–375.
[1521]	Niclas Priester			Was driven from the islands by Wullenwever.	Evensen no. 15
[1522/3]	Jørgen Hanssøn	Bergen		No licence known; complained in April 1524 that under the current conditions, it was not possible to make use of his enfeoffment with the Faroes.	Evensen no. 12; *DN* 6:691
[1524]	Frederyck de Vriese			Was driven from the islands by Wullenwever.	Evensen no. 15
[1524 or 1525], November 10, Gottorp	Peder Fresenberg	[Hamburg][1]			Evensen no. 16.
1529, [February 7]	Eski Bilde	Bergen			Degn p. 12

1 Zachariasen, *Føroyar*, 164.

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(continued)

Date	Name	Place	Y	Comments	Source
1529, [November 28]	Thomas Koppen	Hamburg		The monopoly ended in 1553, after Koppen's death.	Evensen nos. 26–27
1556, April 17 Copenhagen	Mikkel Skriver	Copenhagen			Evensen no. 85
1559, November 2 Roskilde	Andres Jude	Copenhagen	a.g.		Evensen no. 92
1569, June 3 Copenhagen	Matz Lampe; Andres Jude	Copenhagen	4		Evensen no. 119; *KB 1566–1570*, pp. 468–469.
1573, November 3 Kolding	Joachim Thim	Hamburg	a.g.	Licence for trading exclusively; inhabitants were not obliged to trade with him, and he was not responsible for tax collection.	Evensen no. 138; *KB 1571–1575,* p. 346.
1579, February 4 Kolding	Magnus Heinesen	Bergen	a.g.		Evensen no. 145; *KB 1576–1579*, pp. 558–559.
1581, November 1 Frederiksborg	Joachim Thim; Magnus Heinesen; Jørgen Kydt	Hamburg; Bergen; Copenhagen	5	One of the ships had to sail to the Øresund and deliver the taxes to the Danish crown.	Evensen nos. 165, 166; *KB 1580–1583*, pp. 381–382.
1584, June 29 Odense	Niels Skinkel	Gjerskov	a.g.	Non-trading monopoly; the king sent his own merchants during the enfeoffment.	Evensen no. 178
1586, February 22 Kronborg	Joachim Wichman; Oluf Matzen	Hamburg; Copenhagen	10		Evensen no. 187; *KB 1584–1588*, p. 462; *NRR* 2: 648–650

(continued)

Date	Name	Place	Y	Comments	Source
1587, August 23 Rye	Joachim Wichman; Oluf Matzen	Hamburg; Copenhagen	10	Re-issue of the 1586 licence, which was lost when Wichman's ship wrecked in the Elbe on its way to the Faroes.	Evensen no. 189; *KB 1584–1588*, p. 802.
1592, May 8 Copenhagen	Søren Nielsen; Mogens Nielsen	Copenhagen		Shall sail to the Faroes on two ships: *Papegøjen* and *unge Hjørt*. The document is an instruction for the two, which differs largely from the other monopoly charters. In the following years, many single-journey passes were issued to Danish skippers.	Evensen no. 215; *KB 1588–1592*, p. 774.
1597, August 5 Copenhagen	Søren Andersen; Claus Liudt; Johan Wendelcke; Jakob Jakobsen	Copenhagen	3		Evensen no. 229; *NRR* 3:66; *KB 1596–1602*, pp. 198–9.
1600, May 6 Copenhagen	Idem; with the widow of Johan Wendelcke	Copenhagen	3		*KB 1596–1602*, p. 622

Appendix C: North Atlantic merchants in Hamburg

The following table presents a selection of the most important North Atlantic merchants from the records of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants in Hamburg, who have been selected according to the following criteria: *schaffer*, treasurers and elderman of the confraternity; membership in the societies of England and Scania merchants; and holders of a licence for the Icelandic or Faroese trade. As the goal is to capture those persons who were actually active in the North Atlantic trade, persons who are only known as procurators and scribes of the confraternity have not been included. Procurators only show up in the middle of the seventeenth century, when ships to Iceland and Shetland were normally no longer recorded, and scribes were usually not active in the trade.

Sources: SAH 612-2/5, 2 vol. 1 (15330000HAM00); Piper, *Verzeichnis der tätigen Mitglieder*; Krüger, *Namensverzeichnis der Englandfahrergesellschaft*; *Namensverzeichnis der Schonenfahrergesellschaft*. Additional sources have been mentioned in the footnotes. Note that Piper has identified people with similar names as different individuals on the presumption that members of the confraternity were not allowed to hold an office twice (e.g. Asmus Schulte, Laurens Schroder). This is not in all cases supported by the data in the donation register, so in some instances I have considered people with similar names to be the same individuals.

With regards to the column "activity in the North Atlantic trade", it should be noted that the donation register in most cases does not specify the function of a person on board the ships listed. In these cases, I have assumed that the merchants on board can be identified by their making of significantly higher donations, usually more than ten fish, one mark or one Reichstaler. This general classification fits very well with evidence from other sources, and with the lists in which the function of the persons on board is specified, but in individual instances, this approach might result in some incorrect identifications. The data in this table therefore provide a rough overview of the careers of these persons, but for their activity in individual years, the donation register itself should be consulted. Moreover, donations that cannot be connected to an actual journey have been ignored, as these do not give information about the commercial activity of those making the donations.

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Abbreviations:

IF: Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants (*Islandfahrer*) / EF: membership of the Society of England merchants (*Englandfahrer*) / SF: membership of the Society of Scania merchants (*Schonenfahrer*)

S: *Schaffer* / R: *Rekensman* (treasurer) / E: Elderman

b.: birth / m.: marriage / d.: death.

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Arndes, Johan	–		R 1584		
Bade, Berendt	1543–1549 servant in a.o. Ríf 1550–1554 merchant, destination unclear 1555–1560 servant in Ríf		S 1554		
Backmeister, Lutke *d. Iceland*	1553–1563 servant; 1564–1575, 1579–1589 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1568 R 1585	1560	
Baleke, Paul	1597–1600 servant in Keflavík 1613–1614 merchant in Ríf		S 1628 R 1633, 1647 E 1636–1657		1627
Baleman, Hans	1551–1557 servant; 1558–1563 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1563		
Barnefeld, Paul	1593–1594 merchant in Grindavík	1593–1595 Grindavík			
Bartels, Johan	1550–1554 servant in Hafnarfjörður				1573, 1588
Basse, Cordt	1554–1557 servant in the Faroes	1589–1600 Þórshöfn 1592–1600 Vopnafjörður			

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Basse, Jochim	1536–1542 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1535 R 1545		15[..]
Becker, Buske	–		R 1536		
Bene, Carsten	1576 servant in Keflavík 1582 merchant in Básendar				1611, 1613
Berman, Hans	1537–1550 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1554 E 1560–1587[1]	1560	
Berman, Henning	1585–1595 servant in Hafnarfjörður 1596, 1601 merchant in Norway; 1600 in Sweden				S 1645
Berman, Wichman *d. 18-12-1609*	1544, 1548–1550 servant; 1552–1595, 1600 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1562 R 1575 E 1584–1608	1560	
Betke, Mauritz	1533, 1536 servant 1539–1568 merchant in Básendar (1566 Hafnarfjörður)		S 1545		
Betke, Peter	1536 servant; 1538, 1540–1561, 1566 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1543		

1 Koch, "Das Grab des Hans Berman", 45, assumes that this was Hans Berman "the Younger", who died in 1583 in Þykkvabær and was buried there. The elderman Hans Berman is, however, mentioned as elderman in the confraternity's account book until 1587 (SAH 612-2/5, 1 vol. 1, f.95v). Koch does not note this discrepancy and mentions him as elderman until 1583. It is likely the elderman Hans Berman is therefore Hans Berman "the Elder".

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Beverborch, Herman	1577–1596 servant in Ríf 1598–1599 merchant in Hólmur 1600–1602 merchant in Grundarfjörður		R 1604		
Bleke, Cordt	1581–1587 servant; 1588–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1609 E 1613–1627		
Blome, Cordt	1555–1558 servant; 1559–1562 merchant in Iceland		S 1562		
Blome, Hans	1533 servant; 1548–1549 servant in Eyrarbakki		S 1539		
Borstel, Albert vam	–		S 1530		
Borstel, Ratke vam	1533 servant 1542 merchant in Ríf 1548 shipowner/ skipper; 1554–1555 merchant in Iceland		S 1529 R 1546		1543
Botker, Cordt *d. before 21-10-1587*[2]	1580–1581, 1583–1585 skipper; 1582 merchant in Vopnafjörður	1586–1587 Vopnafjörður			

2 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 16): request of Paul Lindeman for a licence for Vopnafjörður, 21 October 1587 (15871021HAM00).

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Brandt, Dirich	1603 servant in Shetland 1610 merchant in Reyðarfjörður 1617–1626 merchant in Skagaströnd 1628 skipper in Shetland		R 1629	1659	
Brandt, Franz	1597–1598 servant; 1599–1602? merchant in Vopnafjörður 1609–1612 merchant in Eyrarbakki 1617–1626 merchant in Reyðarfjörður 1627–1628 merchant in Shetland?		R 1626 E 1631–1641		
Buer, Jochim	–		S 1641, 1642		
Buneke, Hans	1536–1539 merchant in Hafnarfjörður 1542–1556 merchant in northern Iceland (sulphur)		S 1543		
Burhorn, Jost	–		R 1528, 1529	15..[3]	
Biedendorf, Jurgen	–		S 1646 R 1651		

3 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 118.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Campe, Hans van	–		S 1529 R 1538		
Campe, Jasper van	1544–1557 merchant in Ríf 1558 skipper		S 1549		
Carstens, Carsten	1590–1599 skipper and crew member on various ships in Iceland and Shetland				1614
Cörver, Jacob	1623 servant in Shetland		S 1645		
Daberhol, Heyne	–		R 1524–1526		
Danninck, Jochim	1542, 1549, 1552–1558 merchant, usually in Eyrarbakki		S 1557 R 1563		
Davorde, Hinrick	–		E 1522–1541		
Detlefs, Carsten	1533, 1544–1548 merchant in Keflavík / Hafnarfjörður		S 1540 R 1552 E 1556–1559		
Detlefs, Clawes	1543–1544 servant in Ríf 1545–1549 servant; 1551–1555 merchant in Keflavík		R 1559 E 1584–1595		1557, S 1583
Detlefs, Reymer	–		R 1531		
Dickmeyer, Reymer	1543–1552 merchant, usually in Básendar		R 1571		
Doerman, Hans	–		S 1545		
Doren, Marx van	1608–1612 servant in Eyrarbakki; 1615 in Eyjafjörður		S 1630 R 1635		

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Doren, Jasper van I	1547–1561 servant; 1562–1574, 1579–1591 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1578		
Doren, Jasper van II *Father: Jasper I*	1580–1587 servant in Hafnarfjörður 1592–1601 merchant in Hólmur 1602–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður	1599–1601 Hólmur (with Luder Ottersen, Lübeck)		1593-1594	
Drape, Jurgen *d. 1585*	1533, 1537–1548 servant; 1549–1567 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1558 R 1570 E 1575–1583	1557	
Drape, Hans *m. Catharina Hambrock* *d. 19-9-1597*	1585–1587 merchant in Hafnarfjörður			1589	
Ebeling, Otto I *d. 15-4-1608*[4]	1542–1550 servant; 1551–1575, 1580–1598 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1588	1560	
Ebeling, Otto II *Father: Otto* *d. 1622?*[5]	1574, 1580–1591 servant; 1592–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1620	1606, 1616	

4 This is according to the register of the *Englandfahrer*. However, the donation register of the confraternity of Iceland merchants mentions that he was buried in 1611 (f. 477v), so the references might be to different persons.

5 Otto Ebeling II appears for the last time in the donation register of the confraternity in 1622.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Ebeling, Otto III *Father: Otto*	–		S 1633 R 1638, 1649	1623	
Eding, Hans *Father: Hans*	–			1606, 1609	1594, 1622 S
Eding, Lutke I *Father: Hans* *d. 1607*	–			1606, 1609	
Eding, Lutke II	–			1606/9	
Eggers, Clawes	1582 servant; 1583–1588 merchant in Keflavík		R 1595		
Eggers, Hans I	1544–1557 servant, from 1552 merchant in Keflavík		S 1558		
Eggers, Hans II *Father: Jacob*	1552–1571 irregular appearances as servant or crew 1586–1601 merchant in Keflavík		R 1583	1592	
Eggers, Hans III *Father: Matthias*	1590–1594 servant; 1596–1600 merchant in Hofsós	1595–1601 Hofsós			
Eggers, Jacob	1557 servant; 1558–1561 merchant in Keflavík		R 1566 E 1574–1618		1559
Eggers, Matthias *d. 1595 in the Elbe*	1561–1572 servant on various ships 1574–1575 merchant in eastern Iceland 1579–1594 merchant in Skagaströnd / Hofsós	1586–1595 Hofsós			1581

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Eys, Roleff	1582, 1583 servant; 1584–1596 merchant in Ísafjörður	1593–1595 Ísafjörður			
Elers, Barteld *m. Johan Warners' daughter d. 1614 "buten dieser stadt"*	1571–1580 servant in Arnarstapi / Ríf 1582–1594 merchant in Ísafjörður	1586–1601 Isafjörður	R 1590 E 1603–1612	1595/1596	
Elers, Daniel	1586 merchant in the Faroe Islands	1589–1597 Berufjörður 1597 Hrútafjörður			
Elers, Jurgen I *m. Anna Stemmelman d. 1585*	1543–1545 servant in unknown harbour 1548–1552 crew in Ísafjörður? 1554–1556, 1561–1564 merchant in Ísafjörður; 1565–1571 in Iceland; 1573–1575 in Arnarstapi; 1579 in Shetland?; 1580–1585 in Ísafjörður		S 1555 R 1577	1557	
Elers, Jurgen II *d. before 1624*	1570–1573 servant; 1576–1577 in Barðaströnd; 1579–1581 in Hafnarfjörður 1591–1599 individual donations 1600 merchant in Reyðarfjörður		R 1596		1589 S

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Elers, Johan (Hans) *d. 1575*	1540–1574 in Ísafjörður, from 1546 at the latest as merchant; 1553–1564 and 1571–1573 as skipper.		S 1548, 1551 E 1565–1573	1549	1573
Engelken, Hans	1594–1601 servant; 1602–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1618		
Engelken, Werner	1533 servant?; 1540–1557 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1560		
Eybe, Peter	–		S 1539		
Flege, Jurgen	1542–1546 servant; 1547–1564 merchant in Hafnarfjörður			1560	
Focke, Joachim	1563–1572 servant in Vopnafjörður(?) 1580–1581 merchant(?) in Vopnafjörður 1584, 1586–1594 skipper in Hornafjörður 1597; 1599 merchant in Vopnafjörður 1600–1601 merchant in Reyðarfjörður 1604, 1615, 1619, 1623 merchant on various ships (Hofsós, Húsavík)	1586–1598 Hornafjörður 1596–1598 Þórshöfn	R 1627		

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Frese, Clawes	1543–1549 servant or crew; 1550–1564 merchant in Iceland (Westfjords?)		S 1561		1554 S, 1560
Frese, Hans I	–		R 1539 E 1542–1555		1501?
Frese, Hans II	1550–*c.* 1570 servant; *c.* 1570–1592 merchant, mostly to Hafnarfjörður/ Reykjanes		R 1591		
Frigdach, Carsten *d. 1577*	1543 servant; *c.* 1544–1575 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1566 R 1573	1560	
Garleffs, Heyn	–		S 1537 R 1542		
Gerkens, Hans *Father: Hinrich*[6]	1602 servant; 1610–1619 in Eyrarbakki; 1622–1626 in Iceland, usually as helmsman in Eyrarbakki (1623–1626)		S 1629 R 1634		
Gotkens, Simon	–		S 1542 R 1550		
Goldener, Peter	1617–1618 merchant in Shetland		R 1657		

6 This is not Hannes Gerkens, the son of Hamburg barber Henrik Gerkens who settled in Iceland. Hannes is recorded as having made a donation in 1595 in Hafnarfjörður, but stayed in Iceland and died there in 1603. See Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 196.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Graskamp, Jurgen	1594–1597 servant; 1598–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1615	1634	
Grasmoller, Hinrich *Father: Hinrich?*	1618–1619 servant; 1621–1628 merchant or skipper in Shetland		S 1638, 1643		
Gronewold, Hans *d. 1586*	1543–1545 servant; 1547–1548 crew; 1549–1562, 1566–1575 merchant in Ríf		S 1552 R 1574	1557	
Grove, Jurgen	1560–1575 crew on various ships 1581–1582 servant? in Barðaströnd 1583–1601 merchant, from 1590 unclear function (except 1591, 1599 helmsman) in Básendar	1586–1589 Básendar			
Gunnewitt, Arendt	1609–1612 crew (1610 chief boatswain) in Eyjafjörður; 1620–1621 Arnarstapi; 1622 Skagaströnd		S 1635 R 1640		
Hagen, Arndt vam	–		S 1530, 1536 R 1533, 1534 E 1535–1555		
Hagen, Hans vam	–		S 1536		

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Hagen, Michael vam	1539 merchant in Hafnarfjörður; 1542–1547 Básendar.[7]		R 1557		
Hambrock, Dirick	1592–1597 servant; 1598–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1614, 1636 E 1628	1600/1606	
Hambrock, Jacob I	1540, 1544–1551 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1549 R 1555 E 1559–1574		
Hambrock, Jacob II *d. c. 1596*	1565–1572 servant; *c.* 1573–1596 merchant; 1597, 1601 his widow in Hafnarfjörður		R 1594	1581	
Hambrock, Jacob III *m. Lucia van Hutlen buried 14-8-1612*	1575–1578 servant in Ríf 1580–1601 merchant in Hafnarfjörður	1596-1603 Straumur, Vatnsleysa	R 1601 E 1609–1611		
Hambrock, Jacob IV	1600, 1602, 1614 servant		S 1632 R 1636 E 1645–1657	1632	
Hambrock, Jacob V	–		R 1648		
Harbarge, Hans	1533–1557 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1562		

7 In the same years, a Michael vam Hagen is also a crew member on ships to Hafnarfjörður.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Hardt, Hermen	–		R from [1511]		
Hare, Joachim	1594–1603 skipper in Hafnarfjörður	1597–1603 Hafnarfjörður			
Harriestede, Simon "the Younger"	1595–1599 servant in Shetland; 1600–1601 Eyjafjörður 1602–1626 merchant in Shetland[8]		R 1619		
Hars, Hans I	1551–1556 servant? 1560–1564 merchant in Arnarstapi / Búðir		*Schriver* 1563 R 1567 E 1569–1583		
Hars, Hans II	1564–1569 servant / crew 1573–1590 merchant in Arnarstapi / Ríf		R 1586		
Hartge, Johan	–		S 1639		
Hartman, Christoffer	1536–1565 merchant, usually in Eyrarbakki		S 1544		
Hartich, Hans	1546–1552 crew/ servant in unknown harbour 1555–1564 merchant in Vopnafjörður		S 1559		

8 Upon beginning to trade in Shetland, Harriestede came into conflict with Hamburg merchant "Orne Meir": *CBS 1602–1604*, 16–17.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Harvest, Johan	1598–1599 servant or merchant in Hólmur 1600–1602 merchant in Grundarfjörður; 1604–1605 in Russia			1600/1606	
Heihusen, Alert	1543–1557 merchant in Ríf		E 1554–1558		
Heldtberch, Cordt	1600–1601 servant or merchant in Hólmur		S 1626 R 1631		1613
Hesterberch, Arndt *d. c. 1579*[9]	1544–1556 merchant in Húsavík 1561–1575 merchant, harbour uncertain		S 1550 R 1576		1543
Hesterberch, Hans	–		E 1523–1533		
Hering, Hans	1569–1575 servant in Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík 1576 Hólmur 1577–1585 merchant in Keflavík	1589–1603 Þórshöfn 1592–1600 Vopnafjörður			
Hintzke, Hinrick	1543–1552 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1550		
Hynrycksen, Jochim	1540–1545 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1541 R 1548		
Holste, Helmeke	–		R 1520–1522	15..[10]	

9 Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 136.
10 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 118.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Holste, Jochim	1588–1589 servant? in Skagafjörður 1591–1599 merchant in Skagaströnd 1600–1603 merchant in Eyjafjörður		R 1612		
Holtgreve, Hans *d. 1601 Shetland?*	1567–1586 servant / crew on various ships 1587–1600 skipper in Hafnarfjörður 1601 skipper in Shetland	1590–1603 Hafnarfjörður			
Hude, Hans van der	–		R 1523–1524		
Hutlen, Hans van *d. 1611 Shetland, buried 25–9 Hamburg*	1573–1574 servant; 1575–1600 merchant in Keflavík; 1602 Vatnsleysa 1604, 1609 merchant in Shetland	1586–1601 Keflavík 1599–1603 Straumur, Vatnsleysa	R 1588	1581	
Iserhod, Jacob	–		R 1523		
Jacobsen, Jurgen *m. Christina Stemmelman d.1602*	1552–1557 servant in Hafnarfjörður (1556: Grindavík) 1567–1568 merchant in Iceland		Does the accounting 1584	1595 E 1596	
Jaspers, Hans	1581–1583, 1586 crew (helmsman) on various ships 1590–1594 skipper in Hafnarfjörður	1590–1596 Hafnarfjörður			

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Johansen, Conradt *b. c.1560, Patreksfjörður m. Margaretha von Kleve d. 1626/7*[11]	1580–1583, 1585–1590 servant in Barðaströnd 1591–1601 merchant in Ísafjörður	1598–1601 Ísafjörður	R 1622		
Ivenn, Marcus	1537–1542 servant; 1543–1566 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1552		
Kalbrandt, Claus	1627 skipper in Shetland		S 1640 R 1644		
Kellinckhusen, Clawes	1584–1585 merchant in Ísafjörður		R 1597		
Kleve, Claus von *Father: Hans*	1588–1596 servant; 1597–1601 merchant in Barðaströnd	1598–1601 Barðaströnd			
Kleve, Hans von	1567–1568 servant 1571–1601 merchant in Barðaströnd According to Koch, Hans von Kleve was a barber-surgeon, but it is unclear on what this claim is based.[12]	1586–1601 Barðaströnd			
Koep, Michael	–		R 1556		

11 See Koch, *Isländer in Hamburg*, 238–42.

12 Koch, 242n38.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Kopman, Hans I *d.1624*	1548–1557 servant in Akranes / Hafnarfjörður 1559 servant in Vopnafjörður 1560–1603 servant, from 1569 at the latest merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1581 E 1595–1622	1592	
Kopman, Hans II *d.1622*	1571–1600 servant (merchant?) in Hafnarfjörður		R 1613		
Kopman, Hans III *Father: Herman?*	–		S 1643		
Kopman, Herman	1584–1589 servant; 1590–1602 merchant in Hafnarfjörður	1596–1603 Straumur, Vatnsleysa	R 1603 E 1618–1630	1593/1594	
Kopman, Heinrich	1536, 1538–1589 servant; 1542–1547 merchant in Hafnarfjörður 1548–1554 merchant in Akranes		R 1564		
Korner, Peter	1536–1551 skipper in Hafnarfjörður		E 1556–1564		
Kremer, Hans	1533, 1538 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1537 R 1549		
Langwedel, Carsten *m. Hille, daughter of Helmeke Wittenborch d. 22-8-1592*	1551–1557 merchant in Shetland		S 1556	1554	

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Lindeman, Hans *Father: Paul*	1585, 1589 servant in Vopnafjörður	1592–1594 Vopnafjörður			
Lindeman, Paul *m. Cilie, probably daughter of Cordt Botker d. 1591/2?*[13]	1570–1575 servant; 1580–1586 merchant; 1588–1589 skipper in Vopnafjörður	1586–1591 Vopnafjörður			
Lininck, Berndt	1594–1600 merchant in Arnarstapi 1602 skipper 1603–1622 merchant in Shetland		R 1611 E 1618–1630		
Loen, Ditmer	1533, 1536 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1541		
Loen, Hans	1533 servant/crew; 1536–1552 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1546		
Loen, Hinrick	1536 servant in Hafnarfjörður 1542–1567 merchant in Básendar		S 1545		

13 RAK D11, Pakke 26 (Suppl. II, 18a): request of Cilie Lindeman for a licence for Vopnafjörður, 10 March 1592 (15920310HAM00).

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Loring, Ambrosius	1581–1592 merchant (1585–1587 also skipper) in Arnarstapi	1586–1601 Arnarstapi	R 1593		
Lubbeke, Hans van	1542–1547, 1553 skipper in Eyrarbakki / Keflavík		S 1534		
Luessen / Luers / Luders, Hans	1533–1547 merchant in Básendar		S 1535		
Luessen, Hinrich	1539, 1542 servant; 1543–1558 merchant in Básendar 1545–1558 skipper/merchant in Húsavík (sulphur)[14]		S 1553		
Make, Hans	1584–1589 servant; 1590–1596 merchant in Hafnarfjörður			1592	
Martens, Hinrick I	–		S 1527		
Martens, Hinrick II	1536–1564 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1551		1537, 1554
Meyer, Dirick	–		S 1526 R 1532		
Meyer, Lutke	–		S 1526		

14 It is not entirely clear that this is the same person. Donations in the 1560s and 1570s in Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík are probably from a Hinrich Luessen of a younger generation.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Meyer, Gyse	1536–1542 servant; 1543–1559 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1554		
Mildehouet, Hinrich	1591–1592 servant/ crew in unknown harbour			1600/6	
Minden, Cordt van	1549–1550 servant; 1552–1563, 1566–1568, 1571 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1567		
Moller, Cordt I	1564–1565, 1569–1576, 1581–1589 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1579	1581	
Moller, Cordt II *Father: Cordt*	1574–1576, 1580–1589 servant; 1590–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1600 E 1612–1618	1592	
Moller, Dirick	1588–1596 servant; 1597–1601 merchant in Hafnarfjörður 1622 merchant in Hofsós		R 1617 E 1622–1632		
Moller, Hans (Johan) I *m. Catharina Vasmer, daughter of Dirik d. 1-1-1593*	1547 skipper in Shetland			1560	

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Moller, Hans II *d. 1615*	1585–1589 servant; 1590–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1607	1593/1594	
Moller, Herman	1576, 1585 servant/ crew 1586 skipper in Básendar 1587–1594 merchant and/or skipper in Skagafjörður 1596–1600 crew? in Skagafjörður			1609/1616	
Moller, Jochim	1566–1577 servant in Hafnarfjörður			1589	
Moller, Jurgen	1543–1544 servant in Hafnarfjörður/ Básendar; 1545–1564 merchant in Keflavík; 1566–1567 Hafnarfjörður		S 1559		
Moyde, Dirick thor	1554–1558 servant in Básendar				1562, 1593 S
Nanneke, Hans	–		S 1540		
Naries, Johan	–		R 1655		
Nekel, Henrich	1618–1619, 1623 merchant in Reyðarfjörður 1624–1625 merchant in Arnarstapi		S 1637 R 1642, 1650		

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Neygenborch, Hans	1533, 1542–1543 servant; 1544–1561 merchant in Ríf		S 1547 R 1565 E 1566–1568		
Neygenborch, Marten	1562 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1555		
Niebeke, Clawes	1549 merchant in Ísafjörður?		R 1558		
Nyling, Diderich	1593–1600 servant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1631 Nom. R 1636		
Nynberch, Detmer	–		S 1534		
Oldehorst, Albert	1617 “de wandtschnider”			1609/1616	
Olrickes, Olrick	1548–1589 in Hafnarfjörður, as merchant from 1566 at the latest		S 1567		
Osthoff, Bernd	1559, 1562, 1578 servant in Arnarstapi? 1582–1585 merchant in Básendar 1586–1591; 1598–1599 merchant in Grindavík 1594–1595 small donations in Básendar	1586–1592; 1596–1601 Grindavík			
Pren, Harmen	1537–1559 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1561		
Ramke, Hinrich	–		S 1647 R 1653, 1654		1647

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Rathman, Henninck	1536–1544, 1552–1556, 1560, 1562 merchant in Básendar		S 1542		
Ratkens, Hinrich	1574–1575 servant; 1581–1601 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1598	1581	1592
Ratkens, Reimer	1582–1601 merchant in Básendar	1593–1601 Básendar			
Recken, Hans	1547–1554 servant; 1555–1566 merchant in Básendar		S 1568		
Rieke, Simon	–		R 1652 E 1653–1657		
Rykelman, Peter	1533, 1536, 1538 merchant in Iceland		R 1547		
Rors, Hans	1540–1550 servant; 1552–1575 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1560 R 1572		1543
Roegerinck, Herman	–		E *c.*1507		
Rogge, Wilken	–		R 1530		
Rowolt, Hans	–		R 1540		
Sabel, David *d. 1628*	–				1590, 1620 S
Sabel, Herman	1575 servant; 1576–87 merchant in Keflavík (1578–9 Hafnarfjörður)		R 1590		

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Salefeld, Bernd I *d. 1596/7*[15]	1544–1557 irregular crew member in Hafnarfjörður / Básendar 1558–1570 irregular skipper, presumably eastern Iceland 1577–1594 merchant (1577–1582; 1588–1592 skipper) in Ríf	1586–1592 Ríf	S 1563		
Salefeld, Bernd II *Father: Bernd I* *d. 11-8-1615* *buried 15-8*	1584–1585 servant; 1586–1599 merchant in Ríf 1600–1602 merchant in Flatey 1605 merchant in Scotland 1606–1613 merchant in Shetland	1597–1599 Ríf 1600–1602 Flatey	R 1609	1593	
Sander, Heine	1533 servant		R 1543		
Schapeskop, Jacob	1543–1544 skipper; 1547 merchant in Iceland				1531
Schinckel, Jurgen / Georg	1582–1590 merchant in Básendar	1590–1592 Básendar			

15 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): complaint of Herman Beverborch, 15 January 1597 (15970115HAM00).

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Schomaker, Hans	1547–1568 servant, usually in Eyrarbakki	1589–1594 Þórshöfn 1592–1594 Vopnafjörður			1588, 1611, 1613, 1634, 1646
Schroder, Godert	–		R 1527 E 1528–1543		
Schroder, Laurens I	1582–1592 irregularly servant on various ships 1593–1599 servant; 1600–1601 merchant in Skagaströnd 1602–1603 merchant in Eyjafjörður 1608, 1610, 1613–1614, 1620, 1623–1626 merchant in various Icelandic harbours		R 1625, 1628 E 1631–1657		
Schroder, Laurens II	1608, 1610, 1613–1614 servant; 1623–1626 merchant in various Icelandic harbours		R 1645		
Schulte, Asmus	1623 merchant in Keflavík		S 1627 R 1632, 1646 E 1636–1653		1618

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Schuweshusen, Hans	1548–1552 servant; 1553–1555 merchant in Iceland 1556–1564 merchant in Ríf		S 1560		
Selman, Andreas	1599 merchant in Skagaströnd; 1601–1602 in Eyjafjörður	1600–1602 Eyjafjörður			1596, 1640
Sivers, Albert *m. daughter of Hans Hering*[16] *d. 1616*	1580–1581 servant in Hafnarfjörður; 1582 Keflavík 1593–1601 merchant in Skagafjörður (Hofsós) 1602 skipper 1605 merchant in Scotland	1596–1601 Hofsós			
Sivers, Peter *d. c. 1595*	1581 skipper in Barðaströnd	1590–1601 Skagaströnd (from 1596 his widow held the licence)			
Sluter, Michael	1533, 1548 servant; 1539–1550 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1544 R 1556		1543
Soltau, Jacob	–		E 1526/27		

16 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 18b): request for a licence for Skagafjörður on behalf of Albert Sivers, 3 July 1595 (15950703HAM01).

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Stael, Asmus	1545–1553 servant in Ríf; 1554–1558 in Hafnarfjörður? 1561–1564 merchant in Arnarstapi/Búðir; 1568–1571 in Ríf; 1573–1575 in Arnarstapi		R 1568	1567	
Stael, Cordt	1543–1544 servant in Básendar 1545 merchant in Iceland		S 1546		
Steding, Henrich	1594–1601 servant in Keflavík 1608–1613, 1617–1619 merchant in Eyrarbakki		R 1623 E 1631–1634		
Stein, David	1594–1603 servant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1625 R 1630		
Steinkamp, Hans	1583–1590 servant in Eyrarbakki 1591 merchant? in Hólmur 1592–1599 merchant in Grindavík	1596–1601 Grindavík			
Stemmelman, Jochim	1555–1562 servant; 1563–1564 merchant in Ísafjörður 1565–1566 on various ships 1567–1583 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1584		

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Surlander, Johan	1588, 1591 servant in Eyrarbakki 1592, 1594 merchant in Hólmur 1597–1598 merchant in Eyrarbakki		R 1624 E 1633–1635		
Tacke, Cordt	1571–1574 servant in Eyrarbakki 1580–1582 servant in Vopnafjörður 1584–1588 merchant in Ísafjörður	1586–92 Ísafjörður			
Tappe, Hans	–		E 1507/8–1527		
Temmerman, Hans (Hans Lammerman)	1558–1561 servant in Hafnarfjörður 1573–1574 skipper 1575 helmsman? in Hafnarfjörður 1577–1579 servant in Ríf 1584–1586 skipper in Hafnarfjörður	1586–1590 Hafnarfjörður			
Theeten, Hans	–		R 1610		
Thim, Joachim	1568 merchant in Hafnarfjörður 1583–1584 merchant in Faroes 1601 merchant in Reyðarfjörður	1566 Keflavík 1573–1578; 1581–1583 Faroes			1557
Thode, Hans	1533, 1538–1540, 1550 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1553 E 1562–1564		

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Thode, Jacob	–		S 1528 R 1535 E 1541–1553		
Timmerman, Ratke	1557–1564 in the service of Jacob Lutke and Hans Tinsdal 1568–1579 on various ships 1580–1585 skipper; 1586 merchant in Skagaströnd 1587–1588 uncertain 1589–1601 merchant in Barðaströnd	1586–1589 Skagaströnd	R 1602		
Tinsdal, Hans	1549–1553 crew in Eyrarbakki 1554–1579 merchant and skipper in Vopnafjörður / Eastern Iceland?		S 1557		
Valeman, Joachim	1554 skipper in Eyrarbakki 1559–1561; 1565–1574; 1580–1589 skipper in Hafnarfjörður	1586–90 Hafnarfjörður			
Vasmer, Dirick	–		E < 1520–1525, 1529–1540	1530[17]	

17 Rüdiger, *Zunftrollen*, 293.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Vilter, Jurgen *Father: Johan* *m. Anna Sillem*	1591–1601 merchant in Skagaströnd 1601–1603 merchant in Eyjafjörður	1595–1601 Skagaströnd	R 1608	1595/1596	
Vögeler, Marten	–		S 1634 R 1639		
Warder, Baltzer vam	1588–1598 servant; 1599–1603 merchant in Hafnarfjörður 1615–1617 merchant in Hólmur 1618–1619 merchant in Hafnarfjörður 1620, 1625 merchant in Arnarstapi 1623–1624 merchant in Ríf		R 1621 E 1629/1630		
Warder, Joachim vam	1551–1557 servant in Ríf 1567–1570 servant; 1571–1598 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		R 1589		
Warder, Marten vam	1618–1619 merchant in Hafnarfjörður 1620 merchant in northern Iceland 1624–1625 servant in Ríf		S 1636 R 1641		
Warmsen, Clawes	–		S 1528		

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Wegener, Andreas *d. 1624*	1590–1593 servant in Arnarstapi 1594–1603 merchant in Eyrarbakki		R 1616		
Wegener, Herman	1546, 1551 servant; 1552–1556, 1569–1575, 1587–1595 merchant in Eyrarbakki	1586–1589 Eyrarbakki, Þorlákshöfn	S 1561 R 1582		
Wegener, Jurgen I	1540, 1544 merchant in Básendar?		R 1551		
Wegener, Jurgen II *d. 24-12-1623*	1584–1593 servant in Eyrarbakki 1594–1601 merchant in Arnarstapi; 1602–1603 in Eyrarbakki; 1604–1605 in Russia; 1606–1619, 1623 in Shetland (1618 skipper)		R 1605	1593	
Wemeyer, Cordt	1569–1572 servant; 1576 merchant in Keflavík 1577–1578 merchant in Hafnarfjörður 1580–1601 merchant in Keflavík 1602 merchant in Vatnsleysa	1596–1598 Straumur, Vatnsleysa	R 1592	1581	
Westphall, Joachim	1547–1555 crew or servant on various ships to Iceland			1568	

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Wichman, Joachim	1586–1591 merchant in Faroes	1566–1575 Hafnarfjörður 1586–1591 Faroes			
Winock, Jacob *Sheriff of Skriðuklaustur*[18]	1591 Hólmur 1592–1594 merchant in Vopnafjörður 1603–1604 small donations in Eyjafjörður	1595–1600 Vopnafjörður			
Winterlandt, Jurgen van	–		S 1648		
Wittenborch, Dyryck	1533 servant; 1543–1552 merchant in Hafnarfjörður		S 1541		
Wittenborch, Helmeke	1547–1548, 1555 merchant in Shetland		R 1537 E 1543–1561	15..[19]	
Wittorp, Hinrick	1536, 1542–1552 merchant in Básendar 1554–1558 small donations in Eyrarbakki and Keflavík		S 1547		

18 RAK D11, Pakke 27 (Suppl. II, 19): letter from Jacob Winock, Skriðuklaustur, 24 August 1599 (15990824SKR00). See Section 4.4.1.1.

19 Baasch, *Islandfahrt*, 118.

(continued)

Name	Activity in the North Atlantic trade (donation register)	Licences	IF	EF	SF
Wolders, Peter	1536 merchant in Iceland		R 1544		
Woltken, Herman	1544–1545 merchant in northern Iceland (sulphur) 1548–1560 merchant in Básendar		S 1556		
Wordenhoff, Jasper	1552–1557 servant; 1559–1563, 1572 merchant in Ríf		S 1566 R 1569	1589[20]	
Wylssen (Winsen), Hans van	1540–1543 servant; 1545–1546, 1548–1550 merchant in unknown harbour (possibly Ríf); 1547, 1552–1555 merchant in Ríf		S 1553		
Winsen, Jurgen van	1580 crew in Keflavík 1584, 1595–1596 servant? in Skagafjörður 1598 merchant in Hrútafjörður 1602 merchant	1597–1598 Hrútafjörður			
Wullenwever, Joachim *d. Malmö 1559*[21]	1554 Faroes	1520 Faroes 1547? Vestmannaeyjar			

20 This could be another person with the same name.
21 Lappenberg, "Joachim Wullenwever", 109–135.

Appendix D: North Atlantic merchants from Bremen in the sixteenth century

Sources: SAB 2-ad P.9.c.A.1.Nr.1: overview of eldermen of the *gemene kopman*; SAB 2-R.11.ff.: complaints against Harmen Oldensche in Hólmur, 9 December 1548 (15481209BRE00); *maschup* contract 8 April 1549 (15490408BRE00); *maschup* contract 16 April 1572 (15720416BRE00); final plea of Bernd Losekanne against Christoffer Meyer, 1576 (15760200BRE00); SAB 2-R.11.gg.1.: overview of eldermen and *Frachtherren* of the society of Bergen merchants, 1550–1679; SAB 2-R.11.kk.: obligation of Gerdt Breker, September 1557 (15570900SHE00); witness accounts about the sale of a *maschup*, 14 May 1557 and 4 May 1575 (15570514BRE00; 15750504BRE00); complaints of Johan Runge about the interference of Segebad Detken in Baltasound, 26 October 1562 (15621026BRE00); SAB 2-R.11.p.3.b.2. Bd. 1: register of sea passes 1592–1621; RAK D11 Pakke 26: testimonies of old Bremen men about the harbour Berufjörður, 3 December 1590 (15901203BRE00); *SD 1195–1579*, no. 158; *CBS 1602–1604*. The court book provides many more names of German merchants, but these are often hard to identify, or their home towns are not mentioned. Supplementary sources have been indicated in the footnotes.

Abbreviations: BF: member of the *Bergenfahrer* society / HS: elderman of *Haus Seefahrt* / E: elderman of the *gemene kopman* / C: councillor / B: burgomaster.

Iceland merchants

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Alberts, Heinrich	1597 merchant or shipowner in Stykkishólmur[1] 1592–1594 sea passes for a "bott" of 50 lasts named *de Jeger*	1596–1601 Stykkishólmur	

1 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Request to sail to Stykkishólmur, 20 April 1597 (15970420BRE00).

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Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Bake, Carsten *father: Vasmer*	<*c.*1582 merchant in Nesvogur, then Flatey; 1590–1592 Hólmur in partnership with Luder Ottersen from Lübeck;[2] 1593–*c.* 1600 sheriff in Arnarstapi / Snæfellsnes[3]	1586–1589 Flatey 1590–1592 Hólmur 1593–1595 Nesvogur, Landey	
Bake, Vasmer	*c.*1528–1580s merchant in Nesvogur, Kumbaravogur, Arnarstapi and Búðir (1570[4]–1580s), lost a ship in the latter harbour[5]		
Boleman, Bernt	*c.*1548 in Hólmur		
Bornhorst, Christoffer	1570–1571 merchant in Búðir[6]		
Boske, Boske	*c.* 1548 in Hólmur		
Brockman, Hinrich	1600 merchant in Iceland[7] 1594, 1597 sea passes for a "bott" of 32/40 lasts		
Brockman, Jost *born c. 1496*	*c.* 1511 first in Berufjörður as gunner		
Buerman, Herman	1532 skipper in Iceland (Hólmur?)[8]		
Dranteman, Clawes	1600 merchant in Iceland[9]		
Dreyer, Gerdt	1594 skipper? in Búðir and Nesvogur[10]		

2 RAK D11, Pakke 25: Request of Carsten Bake for a licence for Nesvogur and Kumbaravogur, 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE01)
3 See Section 4.4.1.1.
4 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Complaints against Hamburg merchants in Búðir, 23 September 1570 and 23 January 1571 (15700923BRE00, 15710123BRE00)
5 RAK D11, Pakke 25: Request of Carsten Bake for a licence for Nesvogur and Kumbaravogur, 28 February 1593 (15930228BRE01)
6 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Complaints against Hamburg merchants in Búðir, 23 September 1570 and 23 January 1571 (15700923BRE00, 15710123BRE00)
7 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Testimonies about weights in Iceland, 30 December 1600 (16001230BRE00).
8 *DI* 16:302.
9 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Testimonies about weights in Iceland, 30 December 1600 (16001230BRE00).
10 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Complaint of Carsten Bake against Dreyer, 25 July 1595 (15950725ARN00).

Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Durkop, Radtke	1532 skipper in Iceland (Hólmur?)[11]		
Eddelman, Johan	*c*. 1548 in Hólmur		
Egeler, Berendt	1597 merchant or shipowner in Stykkishólmur[12]		
Falenkamp, Berent	1558 in Kumbaravogur?[13]		
Ficken, Clawes	<1557 merchant in Kumbaravogur[14]		
Frese, Folckert	1549 member of *maschup* in Berufjörður		
Gerbade, Gerdt *died 1600*	1597 merchant or shipowner in Stykkishólmur[15] see also Shetland		E 1568
Gerdes, Roleff	1577 chartered by Jurgen Thim from Hamburg[16] 1580 chartered by Joachim Kolling (Hooksiel/Oldenburg) to sail to Kumbaravogur[17] 1580s? sailed to Landey near Kumbaravogur[18] 1592 Sea pass for a "rasegel" of 40 lasts named *dat Mehrwif*, 1599 for a "kraffell" of 30 lasts named *de Valcke*		
Grascher, Wolder	*c*. 1548 in Hólmur		
Haneman, Hans *died 1522*	1522 skipper in Kumbaravogur[19]		

11 *DI* 16:302.
12 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11 Pakke 25: Complaint against Oldenburg merchants in Stykkishólmur, 2 November 1597 (15971102BRE00).
13 Appears in the debt book of Clawes Monnickhusen (no. 127). Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch (2001)", 30.
14 SAB 7,2051: Account book of Clawes Monnickhusen (15570000BRE00).
15 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Request to sail to Stykkishólmur, 20 April 1597 (15970420BRE00).
16 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Complaint of Jurgen Thim against Roleff Gerdes, 19 March 1577 (15770319HAM00).
17 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; NLO Best. 20, -25, no. 6: Complaint of Joachim Kolling against Bremen, 6 April 1580 (15800406OLD00).
18 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Request to sail to Stykkishólmur, 20 April 1597 (15970420BRE00).
19 *DI* 16:268 (15231103BRE00).

Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Harst, Johan	1572 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður (stays at home)		
Hegewisch, Cordt	Merchant in Hólmur until *c*. 1548		
Holste, Henrick	1552 skipper in Búðir[20]		
Honne, Hans	1594 skipper in Nesvogur[21] 1592–1598 sea passes for a "kraffel" of 50 lasts, 1600 for a "kraffel" of 30 lasts named *de Valcke*		
Hoveman, Evert	*c*. 1567–1584 merchant in Nesvogur[22]		HS 1592
Hudeman, Johan	1570–1571, 1587 merchant in Búðir[23]	1567–1601 Búðir	
Hudeman, Wilcken	1526 merchant in Búðir[24]		
Jonsson, Björn	1589 partner of Páll Jónsson in Flatey[25]	1594–1596 Flatey	
Kenckel, Detmar *died 19-2-1584, aged 71*	merchant in Arnarstapi[26] 1567 has outstanding debts for Icelandic stockfish in Verden[27]		C 1549 B 1554–1562
Kinkel	1502 merchant in Arnarstapi?[28]		
Knippe, Johan	Merchant in Hólmur until *c*. 1548		

20 *DI* 12:323.

21 NLO Best. 20, -25, no. 6, Oldenburg complaint about Hans Honne in Nesvogur, 26 August 1594 (15940826OLD00).

22 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Instruction for Heinrich Bredelo, 18 January 1588 (15880118BRE00).

23 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Complaints against Hamburg merchants in Búðir, 1570, 1571 (15700923BRE00, 15710123BRE00), complaints against English pirates, December 1587 (15871200BRE00).

24 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Instruction for Heinrich Bredelo, 18 January 1588 (15880118BRE00).

25 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Declaration of Pall Jonsson, 28 September 1589 (15890928KOB00).

26 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Letter of his son Detmar Kenckel to Bremen, 7 September 1591 (15910907BRE00).

27 Smidt, "Aus Detmar Kenckel's Nachlass", 30.

28 *DI* 8:76; *DN* 16:338: Bergen complaints about the Icelandic trade, 1502. The document does not make clear whether he was from Bremen.

Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Kock, Hans	1527 skipper in Iceland, appears at the Althing[29]		
Kock, Luder	1552 skipper in Grindavík[30]		
Korffmacher, Heinrich	Freighted ships to Berufjörður before 1549		
Koster, Albert	1597 merchant or shipowner in Stykkishólmur[31]		
Koster, Friedrich	1587, *c.* 1593–1595 merchant in Nesvogur[32]	1592–1594 Búðir	
Koster, Johan	1583–1585 shipowner or merchant in Nesvogur[33]		
Kote/Rote, Albert		1596–1601 Stykkishólmur	
Krechting, Herman	merchant in Grindavík/Keflavík, tried to acquire a licence in 1566[34]		
Lanthrede, Johan	merchant in Hólmur until *c.* 1548		
Lehe, Hinrich von	1600 merchant in Snæfellsnes[35] 1604 sea pass for a "both" of 50 lasts named *de Rode Lowe*		

29 *DI* 9:343, version C: Copy of Althing verdict written in Skálholt, July 5, 1527. According to version B, written in Þingvellir, as well as in the Low German translation (SAH 111–1 Islandica, vol. 2), Hans Kock is mentioned among the Hamburg merchants (15270702ISL00).

30 *DI* 12:323.

31 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Request to sail to Stykkishólmur, 20 April 1597 (15970420BRE00).

32 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Complaint to Queen Elizabeth of England about English pirates, 27 February 1588 (15880227BRE00); Carsten Bake requests a prolongation of the licence for Nesvogur, 25 July 1595 (15950725ARN00).

33 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Request for mediation by the archbishop, 27 September 1583 (15830927BRE00); Verdict of the Bremen city council, 3 February 1585 (15850203BRE00)

34 RAK D11, Pakke 25; SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Request for licences, 6 September 1565 and 29 March 1566 (15650906BRE00; 15660329BRE00).

35 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Testimonies about weights in Iceland, 30 December 1600 (16001230BRE00).

Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Losekanne, Bernd *born c. 1511* *Father: Marten*[36]	from *c.*1531 sailor; 1549, 1567–1569, 1572, *c.* 1574 member of *maschup* in Berufjörður (1567, 1572 as skipper*);* 1580 still active there[37]	1569–1576 Berufjörður	
Losekanne, Johan *died before c.1574*	brother of Bernd, sailed to Berufjörður before him (i.e. before 1549)		
Losekanne, Luder *died 9-3-1612*	1572 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður (stays at home) 1597 shipowner in Stykkishólmur[38]		C 1573–1612
Losekanne, Marten *Father: Bernd?*	1572 partner in *maschup*; 1590 merchant in Berufjörður[39]	1586–1596 Berufjörður	
Lubbe, Johan	1570–1571 merchant in Búðir[40]		
Lude, Claus *died and buried 3-6-1585, Helgafell*[41]	Sometime shipowner in Nesvogur?[42] 1558 in Kumbaravogur?[43]	1571 Grindavík	
Luders, Johan	1572, 1576 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður (remains at home)		

36 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Declaration of Eiríkur Árnason, 21 August 1567 (15670821SKR00), in which Losekanne is called "Berndt Martenß".

37 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Complaint of Bremen against Hamburg presence in Berufjörður, 23 January 1580 (15800123BRE00).

38 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11 Pakke 25: Complaint against Oldenburg merchants in Stykkishólmur, 2 November 1597 (15971102BRE00).

39 RAK D11 Pakke 26: Testimonies of Icelanders, 1590 (a. o. 15670821SKR00).

40 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Complaints against Hamburg merchants in Búðir, 23 September 1570 and 23 January 1571 (15700923BRE00, 15710123BRE00)

41 According to his gravestone: Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, Reykjavik, inv. no. 6242/1912-17. See also Section 4.5.

42 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Verdict of the Bremen city council, 3 February 1585 (15850203BRE00)

43 He is mentioned in the debt book of Clawes Monnickhusen (no. 133). Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 30.

Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Meyer, Christoffer *born c. 1521*	1539 barber-surgeon; 1549, 1567, 1572 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður (1572 remains at home); 1580 still active in Berufjörður[44] 1570–1571 merchant in Búðir[45] 1585 shipowner in Nesvogur[46] see also Shetland	1577–1585 Berufjörður	
Meyer, Luder *Father: Christoffer?*	1572–1576 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður		
Moige, Bartold	*c.* 1548 in Hólmur		
Monnickhusen, Clawes[47] I	1552 skipper;[48] 1557–1558 merchant in Kumbaravogur (probably remains at home, see Clawes II)		
Monnickhusen, Clawes II *father: Clawes I*	1557–1558 merchant in Kumbaravogur (stays at home later, 1578 freighter on the ship of Johan Munsterman).[49]		
Munsterman, Hinrick	1558 in Kumbaravogur?[50]		
Munsterman, Johan *died 1578*	*c.* 1540–1578 merchant in Kumbaravogur[51]	1567–1579 Kumbaravogur	

44 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Complaint of Bremen against Hamburg presence in Berufjörður, 23 January 1580 (15800123BRE00).

45 SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11, Pakke 25: Complaints against Hamburg merchants in Búðir, 23 September 1570 and 23 January 1571 (15700923BRE00, 15710123BRE00)

46 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Verdict of the Bremen city council, 3 February 1585 (15850203BRE00).

47 First name uncertain, not mentioned in the sources: Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 29.

48 *DI* 12:323. This could also be Clawes II.

49 Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 24–32.

50 Appears in the debt book of Clawes Monnickhusen (no. 25). Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 30.

51 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Appeal to Joachim Hinck for help in acquiring a licence, 21 October 1570 (15701021BRE00); RAK D11 Pakke 25: Appeal to King Frederick II to allow Munsterman's widow to continue his trade, 9 February 1579 (15790209BRE00); SAB 2-R.11.ff.; RAK D11 Pakke 25: Request for a licence for Neswage, 20 November 1585 (15851120BRE00).

Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Nagel, Bruning	1558 in Kumbaravogur[52] 1585 shipowner in Nesvogur on behalf of the archbishop[53]		
Oldenbuttel, Johan	1590 skipper in Berufjörður[54] 1592–1598 sea passes for a "kraffel" or "rasegel" of 50 lasts named *de Daniel*	1596–1601 Berufjörður	
Oldensche, Herman	*c.* 1548 in Hólmur Possibly Herman Oldenseel, who was later active as a Lübeck merchant[55]		
Osnabrugge, Hans van	1549 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður		
Osnabrugge, Hinrick van	1572–1576 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður		
Pundt, Hinrick	1572 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður		
Ratke, Heine	1569 skipper;[56] 1580 skipper in Kumbaravogur, earlier in Nesvogur[57]		
Rede, Johan van	*c.* 1548 in Hólmur		
Reimers, Brun *died 16-9-1594*	1548 freighted cargo on a ship to Hólmur see also Shetland		C 1548–1593
Reineke, Johan	1549, 1572–1576 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður		
Reymels, Clawes	1558 in Kumbaravogur?[58]		
Ropsleger, Ropke	*c.* 1548 in Hólmur		

52 Appears in the debt book of Clawes Monnickhusen (no. 85). Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch" (2001), 30.

53 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Verdict of the Bremen city council, 3 February 1585 (15850203BRE00)

54 RAK D11 Pakke 26: Testimonies of Icelanders, 1590 (a.o. 15670821SKR00).

55 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Bremen's answer to the complaint of Heinrich Mumme in Berufjörður, 28 February 1567 (15670228BRE00). See also Section 7.2.6.

56 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 36.

57 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Complaints of Johan Munsterman's widow about Joachim Kolling, 1 December 1570 (15801201BRE00); Request to keep trading in Stykkishólmur, 20 April 1597 (15970420BRE00).

58 Appears in the debt book of Clawes Monnickhusen (nos. 4, 5). Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch" (2001), 30.

Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Salomon, Hinrick *died 30-7-1597*	1569 freighter on the ships of Heine Ratke and Johan Munsterman[59] 1582 shipowner or merchant in Nesvogur and Berufjörður[60]		C 1562–1597
Schomaker, Herman *died 1600*	merchant in Grindavík/Keflavík, tried to acquire a licence in 1566[61]		C 1566 B 1584
Schroder, Evert	1587 merchant in Búðir[62]		
Schroder, Johan	1580s skipper in Vatnsleysa[63]	1589–1595 Vatnsleysa	
Schulte, Gert	1548 freighter of a ship to Hólmur		C 1532–1565
Slochter, Johan	*c.* 1548 in Hólmur		
Staeffhorst, Meineke	skipper and freighter in Berufjörður before 1549		
Steffens, Frantz	merchant in Hólmur until *c.* 1548		
Stroteman, Reineke *died before 1572*	1567 merchant in Berufjörður[64] 1572 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður (his widow)		
Swachman, Reineke	1549 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður		
Tilebare, Friedrich	1600 sea pass for a "boott" of 50 lasts	1599–1601 Berufjörður	
Tilebare, Gerdt *died before 1572*	1549 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður, 1572 his widow		
Trupe, Hinrich	1548 freighted cargo on a ship to Hólmur		C 1534–1544
Vasmer, Dirick	1582–1583 skipper in Nesvogur[65]		
Vasmer, Johan	1567 merchant in Berufjörður[66]		

59 Hertzberg, "Tagebuch", 36–37.
60 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Complaints about Hamburg merchants in Berufjörður, 18 January and 1 February 1582 (15820118BRE00; 15820201BRE00).
61 RAK D11 Pakke 25; SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Requests for licences, 6 September 1565 and 29 March 1566 (15650906BRE00; 15660329BRE00).
62 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Complaints against English pirates, December 1587 (15871200BRE00)
63 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Instruction for Heinrich Bredelo, 18 January 1588 (15880118BRE00).
64 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Declaration of Eiríkur Árnason, 21 August 1567 (15670821SKR00).
65 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Request for mediation by the Archbishop, 27 September 1583 (15830927BRE00).
66 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Complaint by Heran Oldensche about Bremen interference in Berufjörður (15670310KOB00).

Iceland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Iceland	Licences	Other
Wake, Reiner	merchant in Berufjörður before 1549		
Walleman, Cordt	1600 merchant in Iceland[67] 1598–1599 sea passes for a "rahboyertt" of 50 lasts named *de Katte*, 1608, 1610–1611 for a "boet" of 40/50 lasts named *de Valcke*	1599–1601 Búðir	
Wedeman, Herman *died 4-9-1584*	1549, 1552,[68] 1572–1576 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður (1549, 1552 as skipper, 1572 remains at home)[69]		E 1563
Wedeman, Luder *born before 1521*	1535 first sailing; 1549, 1572–1576 partner in *maschup* in Berufjörður		
Werenberch, Johan *Father: Herman*[70]	1580 requests licence for Ríf and Nesvogur[71]		
Westerwold, Gerdt	merchant in Hólmur until *c.* 1548 see also Shetland		
Widen, Lambert tor	merchant in Hólmur until *c.* 1548		
Wiggers, Johan	1576, 1582 merchant in Berufjörður[72]		
Wilde	1502 merchant in Arnarstapi?[73]		
Wilkens, Herman		1599–1601 Berufjörður	
Winters, Reineke *died before 1572*	1549, 1572 partner in maschup in Berufjörður (1572 his widow)		
Wisseloh, Wend	*c.* 1575 skipper in Berufjörður		
Wittesant, Clawes	1558, 1570 merchant in Kumbaravogur[74]		

67 SAB 2-R.11.ff.: Testimonies about weights in Iceland, 30 December 1600 (16001230BRE00).
68 *DI* 12:323.
69 According to the Bremen *Tonnengeldregister* (SAB 2-R.2.A.o.2.b.l.), Wedeman transported 5 lasts fish to or from Bremen in 1532 (Hofmeister, "Bremer Kornakzise", 64). However, it was not indicated where the fish came from.
70 Elderman of the *gemene kopman* 1558, councillor 1562, d. 21-10-1566.
71 SAB 2-R.11.ff. (15800813BRE00).
72 RAK D11 Pakke 25: Letter of Archbishop Henry III to King Frederick II about Hamburg merchants in Berufjörður, 26 February 1582 (15820226FUR00).
73 *DI* 8:76; *DN* 16:338: Bergen complaints about the Icelandic trade, 1502. Not entirely sure if he was from Bremen.
74 SAB 2-R.11.ff: Appeal to Joachim Hinck for help in acquiring a licence, 21 October 1570 (15701021BRE00). Appears in the debt book of Clawes Monnickhusen (nos. 108, 114). Hofmeister, "Schuldbuch 2001", 30.

Shetland merchants

Name	Career in Shetland	Other functions
Anteman, Johan	1572 acquires part in a *maschup*	
Baelen, Cordt van	1557 crew of Segebad Detken	
Balleers, Johan	1550–1551 freighter of ships to Shetland (Bressay Sound)[75]	
Barnewolt, Evert	1557 helmsman of Cordt Hemeling in Whalsay[76]	
Bartscherer, Johan	1563 receives permission of Queen Mary for Baltasound;[77] in the service of Johan Balleers before[78]	
Beling, Arendt	1572 acquires part in a *maschup*	
Beling, Johan	1557 in Shetland 1566 merchant in Uyeasound, where he was robbed by pirates twice	
Bicker, Arp	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Binneman, Reineke	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Blome, Hinrick	1557 crew of Segebad Detken	
Brede, Eler	1572 acquires part in a *maschup*	BF
Brinckman, Carsten	1572 part in a *maschup*	
Breker, Gerdt	1557 ship's carpenter in Whalsay / Laxfirth	
Brummer, Hinrick *father: Luder?*	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht 1585 signs debt declaration of Luder Brummer in Shetland[79]	
Brummer, Luder *died before 16-8-1585*	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht 1572 acquires part in a *maschup* 1582–1585 merchant in Shetland[80]	

75 Focke, "Seefahrtenbuch", 99.
76 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Answer of Gerdt Breker in the case about the death of Cordt Hemeling, 7 February 1558 (15580207BRE00).
77 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Letter of Queen Mary to Olave Sinclair, 21 September 1563 (15630921EDI00).
78 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Final plea of Johan Runge against Segebad Detken, 14 December 1562 (15621214BRE00).
79 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Declaration of Dirick Wencken's widow, 16 August 1585 (15850816BRE00).
80 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Debt declarations of Luder Brummer, 1582–3 (15820000BRE02; 15820514BRE00; 15830000BRE00).

Shetland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Shetland	Other functions
Bruns, Wichman *died 1540*[81]		
Buckhoren, Johan	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Cordes, Johan	1560–1562 merchant in Baltasound; servant of Segebad Detken before[82] 1563 receives permission of Queen Mary for Baltasound[83]	
Detken, Herman *father: Segebad I*[84]	1602 merchant in Uyeasound	
Detken, Magnus *father: Herman*	1604 merchant in Uyeasound 1599–1601, 1608 sea passes for a "both" of 40 lasts named *de Engell*	
Detken, Segebad (I) *died 1573*[85] *buried in Lunda Wick*	1557, 1560–1562 skipper in Baltasound / Burravoe[86] 1566 skipper in Uyeasound, where he was robbed twice by pirates[87] Part of *maschup* in Shetland until 1572	

81 His testament from 1540 suggests that he had been skipper in Shetland. Hofmeister, "Sorgen eines Bremer Shetlandfahrers", 51–52.

82 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Rejoinder of Segebad Detken in the case about the harbour Baltasound, 10 December 1562 (15621210BRE00).

83 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Letter of Queen Mary to Olave Sinclair, 21 September 1563 (15630921EDI00).

84 Peter Deetjen and Adolf Deetjen, *Die Bremer Familie Deetjen* (Bergen, 1908), 81.

85 The year of death on his gravestone, which is heavily weathered and overgrown by lichen, is unreadable. MacDonald, "More Shetland Tombstones", 28–30, 35–36, who transcribed the text from a rubbing in 1934, assumes that Detken died in 1573. This is based on on the text on the stone, which mentions that Detken had sailed to Shetland for 52 years, and on an answer of Detken and his companions in the court case against Johan Runge (SAB 2-R.11.kk., 28 January 1563, 15630128BRE00), in which Detken claimed that he had traded there for about 40 years, which would thus mean that he sailed there for the first time in *c.*1522. In that case his 52nd year would be around 1573. However, the document is unclearly formulated, and could also refer to one of his predecessors in the trade. I follow MacDonald's argument here, with the implication that the skipper with the same name who was active in Shetland from 1583 to 1585 is another person. A Segebad Detken from a third generation received sea passes from 1613 onwards.

86 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Declaration of Olave Sinclair about the situation in Baltasound, 18 August 1563 (15630818BRA00).

87 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 158.

Shetland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Shetland	Other functions
Detken, Segebad (II) *died (after) 1598*[88] *father: Segebad I?*	1583–1585,[89] 1592 skipper in Shetland (Baltasound?)	
Eggers, Hinrick	1560–1562 part of *maschup* in Baltasound; 1563 receives permission from Queen Mary for Baltasound[90]	
Ellebracht, Johan	1557 skipper in Shetland	
Esick, Hinrick	Part of *maschup* in Shetland until 1572	BF
Felthusen, Berent	1557 crew of Segebad Detken	
Foege/Voege, Dirick	1562 skipper in Uyeasound[91] 1566 skipper in Shetland, where he was attacked by pirates	
Folkers, Cordt *died 1543*	1543 probably died on a journey to or from Shetland[92]	
Gerbade, Gerdt *died 1600*	part of *maschup* in Shetland until 1572 see also Iceland	E 1568
Grale, Peter	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Hackman, Johan	1557 crew of Segebad Detken	
Hagen, Johan	1557 crew of Segebad Detken	
Heide, Cordt van der	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Hemeling, Cordt *died Shetland, 1557*	1557 skipper in Whalsay / Laxfirth, died from trauma after being wounded by Gerdt Breker Brother of Gerdt	

88 Detken made his testament on 14 June 1587 (printed in Deetjen and Deetjen, *Die Bremer Familie Deetjen*, 81–84), which was copied into the testament register of the city of Bremen upon his death (SAB 2-Qq.4.c.3.b.2.c. Bd. 3). It is included between testaments from July and August 1598, which means that he must have died no earlier than August 1598.

89 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Debt declarations of Luder Brummer, 1583 (15830000BRE00) and Dirick Wencken's widow, 1585 (15850816BRE00).

90 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Letter of Queen Mary to Olave Sinclair, 21 September 1563 (15630921EDI00).

91 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Declaration of Olave Sinclair about the situation in Baltasound, 18 August 1563 (15630818BRA00).

92 Hofmeister, "Sorgen eines Bremer Shetlandfahrers", 46–51.

Shetland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Shetland	Other functions
Hemeling, Gerdt	1557 skipper in Shetland; 1567 skipper in a bay near Sumburgh Head, where his ship was commandeered by James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, on the latter's flight from Scotland[93] brother of Cordt	HS 1592
Hemeling, Johan ("Himmill, Yain")	1602 inherited debts of Cordt Meyer in Dunrossness	
Hilmers, Cordt	1572 part of *maschup*	
Hoeggers, Hinrick	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Holler, Cordt *died 1610*	1572 part of *maschup*	E 1581 C 1584–1595
Icken, Oltman	1557 in Shetland	
Koster, Hinrick	1560–1562 part of *maschup* in Baltasound	
Kummertho, Hinrick	*c.* 1495 merchant in Shetland[94]	
Ladiges, Hinrick	1560–1562 part of *maschup* in Baltasound	
Luers, Carsten	1560–1562 part of *maschup* in Baltasound	
Lunsman, Herman	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Luse, Dirick	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Meyer, Bartold	1560–2 part of *maschup* in Baltasound	
Meyer, Christoffer	1557 sells *maschup* in Shetland see also Iceland	
Meyer, Cordt	1578 indebted to David Tulloch in Dunrossness	
Meyer, Hilmer ("Meiger, Humierus")	1566 skipper in Scalloway, where he was robbed by pirates	
Meyer, Jacob	1582 skipper in Shetland[95]	
Michel, Johan	1560–1562; 1566 skipper in Baltasound / Cullivoe (in 1566 attacked by pirates)	

93 *SD 1195–1579*, pp. 124–125.
94 *HR* III, 4, no. 68; *DI* 11:47 (14980405BER00). It is not clear if his skipper Janeke Bollessen also traded in Shetland.
95 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Debt declarations of Luder Brummer, 1582 (15820000BRE02; 15820514-BRE00).

Shetland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Shetland	Other functions
Middendorp, Herman	1557 in Shetland	
Minden, Hinrich van	1551 skipper in Bressay Sound[96]	
Nagel, Clawes	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Oldenburg, Brun	1557 in Shetland	
Oldenburg, Hinrick	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Pestorp, Dirick *died 2-2-1606*	part of *maschup* until 1572	E 1604
Reimers, Brun *died 16-9-1594*	part of *maschup* in Shetland until 1572 see also Iceland	C 1548–1593
Reiners, Johan	1550 skipper in Shetland, died during shipwreck on the return journey[97]	
Runge, Johan	1560–1562 skipper in Baltasound, moved to Bergen due to competition from Segebad Detken	
Schomaker, Frantz *died 24-3-1583*	1572 acquires part in *maschup*	E 1568
Schroder, Henrick	1557 sold artillery in Shetland to John Pennycuke[98]	
Schroder, Herman	1566 skipper in Whalsay, where he was robbed by pirates	
Schulle, Johan	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht 1562 merchant in Burravoe[99] 1572 skipper of *maschup*	
Segelcken, Hinrick *d. Shetland, 25-7-1585* *buried in Lunda Wick*[100]	1585 signs a debt declaration of Luder Brummer on the ship of Segebad Detken[101]	
Segelcken, Roloff	1557 crew of Segebad Detken; 1560–1562 part of *maschup* in Baltasound	

96 Focke, "Seefahrtenbuch", 99.
97 Focke, "Seefahrtenbuch", 99.
98 *SD 1195–1579*, no. 111.
99 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Declaration of Olave Sinclair about the situation in Baltasound, 18 August 1563 (15630818BRA00).
100 According to his gravestone: MacDonald, "More Shetland Tombstones", 27–28. See also Section 4.5, footnote 311 for a transcript of the text.
101 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: 16 August 1585 (15850816BRE00)

Shetland merchants (continued)

Name	Career in Shetland	Other functions
Sprenger, Christoffer	1560 was accused of having traded illegal goods in Shetland by Grete Embdeman[102] Brother of Hinrick	
Sprenger, Hinrick	1557 acquires *maschup* in Shetland 1560 warrantor for his brother Christoffer, who had traded illegal goods in Shetland	
Steding, Carsten *died 19-5-1597*	1572 part in *maschup*	C 1562 B 1574–1597
Schneman, Tonnies	1602–1603 merchant in Dunrossness 1592–1605 sea passes for a "kraffell" of 24 lasts named *dat flegende Pertt* or *dat Sehpert*	
Schneman, Herman	1602 merchant in Laxfirth 1600–1601 sea pass for a "wyttschip" of 28 lasts named *dat Sehepartt*	
Teieman, Luder	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	
Vaget, Hinrick	1560–1562 part of *maschup* in Baltasound; 1563 receives permission of Queen Mary for Baltasound[103]	
Volmers, Berwardt	1572 part of *maschup*	
Westerwold, Gerdt	1560–1562 part of *maschup* in Baltasound; 1563 receives permission of Queen Mary for Baltasound see also Iceland	
Wicherling, Gerdt	1572 part of *maschup*	
Wickboldt, Ladewich *died 10-3-1603*	1572 sale of *maschup* in Shetland	BF E 1573
Wilckens, Alert	1557 crew of Cordt Hemeling[104]	
Willers, Oldtman	1572 part of *maschup*	
Wulffers, Johan	1557 crew of Johan Ellebracht	

102 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Complaint of Grete Embdeman against Hinrick Sprenger, 31 October 1560 (15601031BRE00).
103 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Letter of Queen Mary to Olave Sinclair, 21 September 1563 (15630921EDI00).
104 SAB 2-R.11.kk.: Answer of Gerdt Breker in the case about the death of Cordt Hemeling, 7 February 1558 (15580207BRE00).

Appendix E: Overview of the donation register of the Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants, Hamburg (online material)

The donation register of the Hamburg Confraternity of St Anne of the Iceland Merchants consists of two volumes, one for the years 1533–1628 (SAH, 612-2/5, 2, Bd. 1), the other for 1629–1657. (Bd. 2). Both contain lists of donations from ships returning from the North Atlantic islands to Hamburg, and from the late 1590s onwards also of single donations. An overview of the donations for each ship in the register, with indications of harbour of destination, skipper, shipowner, important merchants on board, and total number of donations from the ship is available as additional material to this publication under https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110655575-016. A full transcript of the first volume can be found in the online source database *HANSdoc*, https://hansdoc.dsm.museum/Docs/15330000HAM00.html.

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Register of persons and places

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